

JPRS-TEP-94-001
4 January 1994



JPRS Report

Epidemiology

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REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Cooperation Agreement Signed With Kenya, Uganda

EA0112131293 *Dar es Salaam Radio Tanzania*
External Service in English 1800 GMT 30 Nov 93

[Excerpts] A document which outlines and identifies areas of political, economic, social and cultural cooperation among the three East African countries, was formally signed by foreign ministers today. The 10-page document contains agreed areas of cooperation under the East African Community Mediation Agreement of 1984. [passage omitted] The ministers recommended cooperation in health such as the control of HIV and AIDS, joint use of specialized health facilities such as for heart surgery, renal transplant, curative services and research. [passage omitted]

KENYA

Ministry: No Care for AIDS Victims

94WE0097A *Nairobi THE KENYA TIMES in English*
8 Oct 93 p 13

[Text] The Minister for Health, **Mr Joshua Angatia** yesterday warned that in future, Aids patients will have to be catered for by their families because the Government could not afford to maintain them in hospitals.

He said if all Aids patients were to be admitted to hospitals, then it would mean that patients suffering from curable diseases would not get hospital beds. He said Aids patients in the country were 35,000 while HIV positive cases had reached 800,000.

The Minister, who was moving a motion seeking the £109,986.945 for the year 1993/94 said if the Government continued admitting Aids patients in hospitals, then it meant that those suffering from the common diseases would have to die in their homes.

Mr Angatia, who is also the Malava MP, said health care programmes had been introduced and that district health management boards will now be allowed to use 75 per cent of money collected in the cost-sharing to purchase medicines.

He said the Government was advising the Nairobi City Council on step to take to run its clinics on a 24-hour basis, to avoid congestion at Kenyatta National Hospital.

He disclosed that Pumwani Nyayo Wards will be opened soon and that the Infectious Diseases Hospital commonly known as IDH will be converted into a district hospital.

Seconding the motion, the Minister for Labour, **Mr Philip Masinde**, said too much money was being used in maintaining ambulance vehicles. He cited cases where a battery could go down in a car leading to its grounding.

He said the cost of medical attention had shot up and that Kenyans could no longer afford to get sick. He said some hospitals were demanding as high as Sh16,000 admission fee.

UGANDA

Fourteen Deaths From Meningitis in Mubenda District

94WE0098A *Kampala THE NEW VISION in English*
20 Aug 93 p 15

[Article by Alibosit Vincent: "Meningitis Hits Buwekula"]

[Text] Fourteen people have died in Kibalinga, Buwekula areas in Mubende district recently. According to the medical report issued by the Medical Superintendent, Mubende Hospital Dr Ngobi, the cause of death was meningitis.

The disease has reportedly claimed many lives in various areas of Mubende district but the worst hit being Kibalinga, Kasana in Buwekula areas. Only a few cases have so far been reported to the District medical authorities.

The District Medical Officer, Mubende Dr Bagambisa George revealed it was a strain of malaria parasites which was difficult to treat using ordinary malaria drugs. He attributed the escalating number of deaths to the ignorance of the people about the prevailing outbreak of the disease. He said normally during dry periods meningitis is common among the people and claims a lot of lives.

He also conceded he had received reports of the disease in the district.

Meanwhile, a source who talked to *The New Vision* and asked for anonymity, disclosed a district team headed by the District Medical Officer, Dr Bagambisa is soon to go around the district educating people about the causes of these rampant deaths.

Twenty Sudan Refugees Die of Meningitis, Measles

94WE0098B *Kampala THE NEW VISION in English*
21 Aug 93 p 16

[Article by Yunusu Abbey: "20 Sudan Refugees Dead in Arua Camp"]

[Text] Over 20 Sudanese refugees have so far died after contracting meningitis and measles at two transit camps here. Many more are down from the same causes.

The dead comprise mainly old men and women as well as children living under squalid conditions at the camps, four miles from Koboko town along Moyo-Koboko road.

The death occurred between last week and mid this week, according to Red Cross workers at the camps.

"Between five to six people are dying here daily," said a Red Cross volunteer from Arua who is involved in the operation.

On Monday August 16 alone, nine people died in one camp. Four others had died the previous day while another four died on Tuesday. The adults are mainly dying of meningitis while children are dying of measles.

Aid workers however expressed fear that the death toll might rise because of the unhygienic and poor sanitary conditions at the camps.

By Thursday the 30,000-plus refugees living in the two camps, had no toilets. Pit latrines had not been dug. They were also faced with an acute water shortage. The British charity organisation Oxfam, was still surveying nearest possible source of water for them.

Besides, refugee families are crammed in poorly built grass-thatched huts, while others are sleeping under trees. Tents have been given out to some but many have not yet received any.

RC officials distributing the food say though the bombing had ceased at the southern Sudan border town of Kaya, more refugees were still coming in. Four truckloads arrived at the Koboko camps mid this week.

The refugees are mainly of the Kakwa ethnic group of southern Sudan. Their dialect is almost similar to that of Uganda Kakwas in Koboko. But they complained that SPLA [Seychelles People's Liberation Army] fighters, mainly Dinka, confiscated and looted their property as they fled to Uganda.

Sudanese Anglican Bishop Semmey Solomon has also sought refuge at Koboko. He is now staying with some Ugandan priests at Nangilia parish.

ZAMBIA

Meningitis Spreads to Southern Province

94WE0099A Lusaka *TIMES OF ZAMBIA* in English
9 Sep 93 p 1

[Text] Meningitis which broke out in Lusaka and the Copperbelt has spread to Southern Province, claiming seven lives in Kalomo.

Kalomo district hospital has so far treated 22 patients including 10 pupils from Kalomo secondary school.

Ministry of Health epidemiologist Dr Roy Chimba who confirmed the spread of the disease yesterday, said since it was recorded last week, 14 other patients were treated at Simwatachela rural health centre.

Four of the deaths occurred at home. The other three at Kalomo district hospital.

In Ndola, the admission rate at the central hospital had increased from 53 patients under treatment last week to

87 this week. He said the situation in Ndola was not improving. Arthur Davison hospital had 50 patients under treatment yesterday.

Kitwe Central Hospital had 23 cases under treatment and had no admission for four days. Wusakile mine hospital had only nine patients being treated for the disease.

ZIMBABWE

730 TB Cases in Harare in Three Months

94WE0100A Harare *THE HERALD* in English
25 Sep 93 p 1

[Text] More than 730 cases of tuberculosis were reported at Harare City Council's two infectious diseases hospitals between January and March this year, an average of 243 a month or almost 3,000 a year.

Of the cases reported, 70 percent were male. A report from the Director of Health Services, Dr Lovemore Mbengeranwa, tabled before the council on Thursday said that 264 of the cases had been diagnosed as sputum positive pulmonary TB and 42 as sputum negative pulmonary TB.

A total of 676 notifications were received and investigated, and TB accounted for 544 of them, the director said.

There was a decrease in the number of sexually transmitted diseases cases reported at primary care clinics compared to the same period last year. The 20 to 34 age group, however, remained the high-risk group.

Meanwhile, 12 cholera cases were reported during the same period and measures were taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

TB Outbreak at Chiredzi Hospital Reported

94WE0100B Harare *THE HERALD* in English
22 Sep 93 p 7

[Text] The Minister of Health and Child Welfare, Dr Timothy Stamps, yesterday confirmed recent Press reports that over 20 members of staff had contracted tuberculosis at Chiredzi District Hospital.

Dr Stamps told reporters in Chiredzi that 20 nurses and six general hands had contracted TB but neither confirmed nor denied that four nurses had died of the disease.

"They did not die of TB, we all know what they died of," he said.

Investigations to establish the cause of the outbreak were underway while efforts to protect staff from TB were being made, he said.

Dr Stamps said precautions being taken to prevent the recurrent of such incidents included proper disposal of

TB positive Sputum, the use of masks by staff, proper changing of bed linen and thorough cleaning of hospitals.

"TB is a big problem in Chiredzi, you should put in place extra precautions to reduce the risk of TB spreading," he said.

He, however, said staff also had a duty to protect themselves but did not guarantee a "non-risk situation."

Dr Stamps said in 1992 Masvingo recorded 377 deaths resulting from TB of which 144 were from Chiredzi. He said at least 200 TB cases were reported every three months in Chiredzi.

Justice Minister Reports AIDS-Related Prison Deaths

94WE0100C Harare THE HERALD in English
23 Sep 93 p 1

[Text] At least 223 people have died in Zimbabwean prisons since January, 130 of them of Aids-related diseases, the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, Cde Emmerson Mnangagwa, told Parliament yesterday.

The grim statistics show that not less than 15 prisoners have died each month in Zimbabwe's gaols since the beginning of the year.

The highest number was 43, who died of various ailments in July.

Of the Aids-related illnesses, the lowest number of deaths was seven in April, while the highest was 30 for May.

Responding to a question by Chief Edgar Musikavanhu, who asked what measures were being taken to improve living conditions in Zimbabwe's prisons, Cde Mnangagwa said most of the deaths occurred after a short stay in prison.

"We are made to understand from a medical point of view that these illnesses, particularly those which are HIV-related, could not have been contracted in prison on account of the short period of incarceration."

"It is true that there is an increase in the number of prison deaths. It should, however, not be forgotten that this is a phenomenon which is not peculiar to the prison system only. Hospitals countrywide are reporting increasing numbers of deaths," he said.

The longest period of stay in prison of those who died was 31 months and the shortest was 14 days.

Cde Mnangagwa said there had been an increase in the number of deaths in prisons over the past five years with a corresponding increase in HIV-related deaths.

"On the other hand, it should also be noted that with the increase in the prison population figure the number of deaths is likely to increase," he said. Zimbabwe's prison population rose from 15,000 in 1989, to the present figure of 19,600.

In 1992, there were 20,600 people in jails, but the number came down following a general amnesty earlier this year.

Cde Mnangagwa denied that deaths in prison were due to the living conditions or to alleged outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases.

A committee had been set up to look into the issues related to deaths in prisons and a comprehensive report would be submitted to the ministry in "due course."

A report by the Catholic Commission for Justices and Peace, which described conditions in Zimbabwe's prisons as "horrible," lacked detail and did not give a balanced picture.

The report alleged rampant sexual abuse, food shortages, poor health facilities, diseases, overcrowding and assaults by prison officers.

Beijing Forms AIDS, Venereal Disease Prevention Association*SK0312021193 Beijing BEIJING RIBAO in Chinese
26 Nov 93 p 3*

[By Reporter Zhong Weining (6988 5898 1337): "The Beijing Association for Prevention and Curing of Venereal Disease and AIDS Is Established"]

[Text] AIDS [acquired immune deficiency syndrome] cases occurring before 1 December, World AIDS Awareness Day, have again sounded the alarm for us.

According to the report published by the municipal sanitation and antiepidemic department on 25 November, ever since the advent of AIDS in Beijing in 1985, 55 persons have been found infected with the virus—32 are foreigners, 11 are from other provinces and municipalities, and 12 are residents of Beijing. Beijing ranks third in the country in the number of persons infected with the AIDS virus. The first reported case of AIDS in our country was in Beijing; the first venereal disease patient infected with the AIDS virus was found in Beijing; and the first overseas laborer infected with the AIDS virus was also discovered in Beijing.

In addition, venereal disease which had basically been eliminated in Beijing in the middle of the 1960's has revived. It is reported that about 800 new persons have suffered from venereal disease each year. Moreover, we have already found cases in which children and infants are born infected with the venereal disease.

On the one hand, analysis of the reason why Beijing ranks third in the country in the number of persons infected by AIDS virus is an indication of the seriousness of the threat imposed by AIDS in Beijing. On the other hand, it also shows that the attention of municipal government, economic input, and advanced technology have made Beijing's AIDS discovering rate higher than average. According to the analysis of the sanitation and antiepidemic specialists, Beijing is a low AIDS-infected epidemic area.

To prevent and control the spread of AIDS and venereal disease in an even more effective manner, Beijing took the lead in the country to set up the Beijing Association for the Prevention and Cure of Venereal Disease and AIDS on 25 November. Thus far, more than 70 units of 17 trades, including medical prevention and curing, tourism, press, and civil administration, have joined this AIDS prevention organization.

Minister Views Difficulties in Eradicating Polio*HK2311040293 Hong Kong SOUTH CHINA MORNING
POST in English 23 Nov 93 p 9*

[By Daniel Kwan]

[Text] China has set 1995 as the target year to eradicate polio but its efforts have been hampered by the country's large size and an increasingly mobile population, an

official said yesterday. After a cheque presentation ceremony in Hong Kong yesterday, Guo Xianzhi, a deputy director of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Co-operation, said another problem was insufficient vaccine production capacity. "The Chinese Government is making every effort to achieve the eradication of polio by the year 1995 ... That's the guarantee made by the Chinese Government not only to children in China but also to children of the world," said Mr Guo.

The Ministry of Public Health estimated China would need about \$530 million to eradicate polio. As much as \$460 million will be used to purchase vaccine. Mr Guo said although impressive results had been achieved in the fight against polio, the next two years would be critical. "From several thousand cases down to 1,000 cases is a little easier. However, for the last few hundreds, if you consider China's large area and population ... it could be no easy job."

China has reported a steady decline in polio in the past three years. In 1990 it registered over 5,000 cases of polio and the figure dropped to 1,191 last year. However, it is believed cases of polio could be many times higher than those reported.

Under the present plan a nationwide polio eradication campaign will be launched in early December, when every child under the age of four will be given one pill of vaccine. A second pill is to be administered early next spring. "At the moment we have about 100 million children who are under four years old, so you can imagine the efforts, the cost and resources involved in this are very immense," Mr Guo said.

In addition, the Government also needs to provide vaccine for the 20 million newborn babies each year. By 1989 China had received over \$150 million from the United Nations to improve its vaccine storage facilities.

Government To Inoculate 100 Million Children Against Polio*HK0212041093 Hong Kong SOUTH CHINA MORNING
POST in English 2 Dec 93 p 11*

[Report by John Kohut in Beijing]

[Text] About 100 million children in hundreds of thousands of villages and towns across China will be inoculated against polio beginning on Sunday in the biggest mass immunization programme the world has ever seen. The two-day immunization blitz, which will be repeated on January 5 and 6, is part of an effort by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Chinese Government to eradicate the polio virus from China by 1995.

The strategy behind the mass immunization campaign was "to just smother the whole population with oral polio vaccine, and hopefully wipe out the dangerous virus," said Dr Kingsley Gee, the WHO representative in China. WHO hopes to wipe out the polio virus worldwide by the year 2000, and believes China is well within

reach of eradicating it within two years. "If China does it, we hope it will set a faster pace in the rest of the world," Dr Gee said.

So far this year, China has reported 430 incidents of polio. However, without a mass immunization programme, the country is still vulnerable to the possibility of another upswing in polio cases. About two million doctors, health workers and support staff will be involved in the immunization drive, aimed at inoculating all children under the age of four.

The serum has cost U.S.\$7.3 million (H.K.\$56.37 million), half of which was paid for by China and the remainder of the bill being paid by outside donors. This round of immunization should wipe out the virus in most provinces, but a repeat programme would probably be needed next year in Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou and Hainan, Dr Gee said.

Commentator Hails Polio Immunization Campaign

HK1012033093 Beijing RENMIN RIBAO in Chinese
5 Dec 93 p 4

[Commentator's Article: "A Major Event in Protecting Children's Health—Polio Immunization Program Begins 5 December"]

[Excerpts] With State Council approval, urban and rural areas across China will take unified action today to start a polio immunization program for children under the age of four. This is an important measure adopted by the Chinese Government to protect children's health and improve the quality of the Chinese population, as well as an important event in the history of public health in China. [passage omitted]

Western Asia, in which China is located, has set a 1995 deadline for the elimination of polio.[passage omitted]

The Chinese Government all along has attached importance to children's issues, and has regarded concern for children's healthy growth as a basic major issue in national construction. In 1965, China succeeded in developing a live polio vaccine, which has been applied in various places in China since that same year. In the "10-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development and the Program for the Eighth Five Year Plan," which China adopted in the early 1990's, planned immunization was listed as an important measure for protecting children's health. In 1991, Premier Li officially signed, on behalf of the Chinese Government, the "Declaration on the Subsistence, Protection, and Development of Children" and the "Plan of Action" for implementing this declaration, thus making a solemn commitment to the whole world. In 1992, the State Council officially promulgated the "Program and Plan for the Development of Chinese Children in the 1990's," and included the elimination of polio by 1995 as an important goal for the protection of children's health.

To eliminate polio and cut back on the handicapped population is of great significance today. On the basis of achieving a planned polio immunization rate of 85 percent, China in recent years has adopted a series of measures—based on provinces and counties as units—to accelerate the elimination of polio, and it has achieved pleasing results in the past few years. The incidence of polio has fallen with each passing year, and no cases have occurred in the urban areas of some cities, whereas the incidence of polio has approached or achieved the lowest level in history. This situation has won the universal admiration of the international community. However, because of China's vast territory and huge population, as well as the great differences between various places, the development of the planned polio immunization among children is imbalanced, and weak links continue to exist. Regarding the absolute figure in the incidence of polio, China still accounts for around one-fifth in the world, ranking top among the 35 countries (regions) in Western Asia. Should we fail to take unified action in unfolding a polio immunization program, it would be very difficult to achieve the goal of eliminating polio. This being the case, China has decided to take the current nationwide immunization program as a crucial measure for eliminating polio, and is ready to seize the favorable period between now and January 1995, when the spread of polio virus is comparatively weak, to unfold polio immunization programs twice each year so as to upgrade children's organic resistance to the virus.

The immunization program, which involves approximately 100 million children, is unprecedented in China. To make the program successful calls for the active participation of the whole society and the close coordination of various departments. [passage omitted]

Medicine Developed for Iron-Deficiency Anemia

OW1812074793 Beijing XINHUA in English
0728 GMT 18 Dec 93

[Text] Beijing, December 18 (XINHUA)—A new kind of medicine for treating iron-deficiency anemia has been developed by a health care products factory in Zhanjiang City in south China's Guangdong Province.

Nearly 1,000 clinical tests showed that the drug was 98 percent effective.

The medicine, "Weixue Chongji," which is taken mixed with boiling water, is made from traditional Chinese medicine ingredients.

It is said to be more easily absorbed and to have no side-effects on the stomach or intestines, making it an improvement on medicine made from ferrous sulfate that iron-deficiency anemia patients in China use at present, said medical experts at a symposium on women and health care held here.

Iron-deficiency anemia is a disease with high incidence worldwide, said the experts. In China, the incidence of this disease is about 40 percent among children and 20 percent among women.

China, U.S. Cooperate in Chronic Disease Research

OW0912015193 Beijing XINHUA in English
0114 GMT 9 Dec 93

[Text] Hefei, December 9 (XINHUA)—In the countryside chronic diseases are closely connected with patients' occupations and their working and living environment, according to a large-scale investigation now being conducted in east China's Anhui Province.

The investigation is part of a co-operative research program between Anhui Medical University and the Medical College of Harvard University in the U.S.

The research into chronic and non-infectious diseases, which started in May this year and will continue for 20 years, aims at clarifying the role of occupation- and environment-related factors that cause chronic diseases.

Since the 1970s the death rate from infectious diseases has been effectively curbed worldwide because of the introduction of effective vaccines and antibiotics. However, not much research has been done on the relationship between the environment and occupations, and chronic diseases such as tumors and heart disease, which are now major causes of death.

The two institutes chose the Yingjiang district of Anqing city, Yijin town in Jiyang County and Haikou town in Huaining County, all in Anhui, as the focus of their field work.

A four-month investigation of 52,000 of the total 60,000 population in the three areas has already been concluded, covering 2,378 items, including chronic respiratory ailments, the influence of pesticides on health, female fertility and medical services in the countryside.

An investigation of the urban population in the same areas will soon be carried out.

These surveys will be repeated at five-year intervals, and the information will be fed into computers.

Parasitic Diseases Said To Infect 62 Percent of Population

HK2711072893 Beijing CHINA DAILY in English
27 Nov 93 p 3

[By staff reporter Zhu Baoxia: "Parasites Infect Most of Nation's Population"]

[Text] Parasitic diseases have infected more than 62% of Chinese residents and have become a major threat to public health, especially in rural and ethnic areas.

Some medical specialists suggest that central and local governments include parasitic disease control in their

social and economic development programmes and increase budgets for parasite eradication.

Ministry of Public Health experts, who recently completed a nationwide survey exposing the problem, hoped that extensive publicity and education could raise the public's awareness regarding parasitic illnesses.

The survey found that of the 62% of Chinese infected with intestinal parasites, some 43% had two or more species of parasites. Some persons had as many as nine species.

The rate of infection is even higher among farmers and ethnic people because of their agricultural activities and dietary customs.

Most are infected with roundworm, pinworm, and whipworm.

It is estimated that some 531 million people in the country have roundworms.

Each year, the central and local governments spend some 150 million yuan (about \$26 million) treating people infected with such soil transmitted parasites as roundworm, pinworm, whipworm, and hookworm.

The national survey, the first and the largest of its kind in Chinese history lasted for eight years from 1988 to 1992 [years as published].

The Ministry of Public Health and local governments spent more than 5.2 million yuan (over \$900,000) for the survey which involved about 8,000 technicians and medical specialists.

The survey selected 2,848 pilot sites in 726 counties, and some 1.5 million persons were surveyed by fecal examination.

A total of 56 species of parasites were detected on the mainland. Of those, three species of trematodes detected in Anhui and Fujian provinces are the first recorded in humans on the mainland. Another species, also found in Fujian Province, is the first instance of infection in a human.

The highest infection rate—nearly 95%—was reported in South China's Hainan Province. The lowest—17.5%—was in northeastern Heilongjiang Province.

Beijing To Use Law To Avoid 'Inferior Quality' Births

OW2012114093 Beijing XINHUA in English
1114 GMT 20 Dec 93

[Text] Beijing, December 20 (XINHUA)—China is to use legal means to avoid new births of inferior quality and heighten the standards of the whole population.

The measures include deferring the date of marriage, terminating pregnancies and sterilization, according to a draft law on eugenics and health protection, which was

presented to the current session of the Eighth National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee.

Explaining the law to participants at an NPC session that opened here today, Minister of Public Health Chen Minzhang said that the measures will help prevent infections and heredity diseases and protect the health of mothers and children.

Under the draft law, those having such ailments as hepatitis, venereal disease or mental illness, which can be passed on through birth, will be banned from marrying while carrying the disease.

Pregnant women who have been diagnosed as having certain infectious diseases or an abnormal fetus will be advised to halt the pregnancy. Couples in the category should have themselves sterilized, the draft says.

China is in urgent need of adopting such a law to put a stop to the prevalence of abnormal births, Minister Chen explained. Statistics show that China now has more than 10 million disabled persons who could have been prevented through better controls.

The draft also stipulates that organizations that are engaged in pre-marital checks, eugenics, pre-birth diagnosis or sterilizations should be approved by the authorities at the county level and above.

Personnel involved in this area should be subjected to strict training, Chen said.

The minister of public health called on medical authorities at various levels to establish a comprehensive network for the implementation of the law.

The draft does not state whether China will adopt euthanasia to eliminate congenitally abnormal children, saying that the international community has not come to a conclusion on that issue.

The draft also does not touch on the issues of artificial fertilization or test-tube babies because the effects of these techniques have caused some disputes and because it's too early to put any limitations into law, Chen said.

Minister Chen said the government should strengthen its control and supervision of these techniques. He called for the Ministry of Public Health to work out tentative management measures of control.

Medical College Changes Name, Reports Student Numbers

*OW2812171093 Beijing XINHUA in English
1314 GMT 28 Dec 93*

[Text] Beijing, December 28 (XINHUA)—The Beijing College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the key national college of Chinese medicine, today changed its name to the Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Premier Li Peng wrote a message for the university, which reads: "train capable people in order to invigorate the cause of traditional Chinese medicine."

In another message, Tian Jiyun, vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, wrote: "carry forward traditional Chinese medicine to serve China's modernization drive."

Vice-Premier Li Lanqing sent a message asking the university to train as many doctors of Chinese medicine as possible.

A university executive said that since 1957 his university has trained nearly 1,000 traditional Chinese medicine doctors for 79 countries and regions.

Now, 280 students from 38 countries and regions are studying at the university, he added.

The university is also cooperating with its counterparts in nine countries and regions in setting up schools, hospitals, clinics and research institutes overseas, he said.

Number of Drug Addicts Estimated at 250,000

*HK1412020493 Beijing ZHONGGUO XINWEN SHE
in English 1344 GMT 13 Dec 93*

[Text] Beijing, December 13 (CNS)—There are now an estimated 250,000 drug addicts in China with the trend spreading from Yunnan Province to other areas in Guizhou, Sichuan, Gansu, Shaanxi and Guangxi, affecting some 700 counties in 17 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities in all, the Minister of Public Health, Mr Chen Minzhang, said.

Speaking at a inaugural meeting on the prevention of drug abuse, Mr Chen said that most drug addicts were teenagers with the drugs used ranging from opium to refined heroin. Crimes resulting from drug addiction are now on the rise and include burglary and robbery, murder, fraud and the kidnapping of women and children for sale.

About 60 percent of AIDS cases in China were due to intravenous heroin injection.

As publicity on the dangers of drugs is still inadequate, drug abuse is now quite serious in the country.

Mr Chen said he believed that with economic prosperity, the pharmaceutical industry had mushroomed with the appearance of serious drug abuse and the administration of drugs had become an arduous task.

The ministry had adopted a number of measures to strengthen drug administration and guide the production and marketing of drugs. As drug abuse is a complicated social problem, it requires a massive input from various sectors to deal with it. An association whose aim is to prevent drug abuse was formally set up today with the approval of the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Civil Affairs with the Vice Chairman of the

Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, Mr Fei Xiaotong, as its honorary president and Mr Chen as its president.

Health Minister Calls for Publicity Campaign Against Drugs

*HK1412065793 Beijing CHINA DAILY in English
14 Dec 93 p 3*

[By staff reporter Zhu Baoxia: "Call For New Drive To Beat Drug Abuse"]

[Text] A senior government official yesterday called for a nationwide publicity campaign to fight drug abuse.

Public Health Minister Chen Minzhang was speaking as a new body, the Chinese Association for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment, was founded in Beijing.

Chen, who was elected chairman of the association, said it would be a great help in the government's battle to control and treat drug addiction.

The association is composed of medical experts and officials from relevant State departments.

It will carry out publicity campaigns warning of the dangers of drugs, treat addicts and abusers and guide medical units in the clinical use of narcotics.

Narcotics are indispensable as effective painkillers, Chen said, but their random use could be harmful.

A sample survey in Beijing found three in every 1,000 people are dependent on drugs.

China now has 250,000 registered drug addicts, most of them young and middle-aged men, in 17 provinces across the country. But experts say the actual figure must be higher.

Most of the addicts, reliant generally on heroin and opium, are concentrated in the south and northwest of the country.

Drug abuse has become the major channel for the spread of HIV, which leads to AIDS.

Among the 1,159 HIV carriers reported from China's mainland, about 60 percent got infected through intravenous injection of narcotics.

Drug abuse, according to World Health Organization (WHO), is the excessive use of narcotics, tobacco, alcohol and medicines which may lead to addiction.

CAMBODIA

Government Sets Up Anti-AIDS Commission

BK2412050493 Phnom Penh AKP in English
0424 GMT 24 Dec 93

[Text] Phnom Penh AKP December 24—Cambodian Government has decided to set up an anti-AIDS national commission as the number of people recorded HIV positive jumped up to 2,000 by late this year, among them 223 developed AIDS.

The figure was seen in a report delivered by Chhea Thang, minister of public health, on the occasion of world AIDS day held in Phnom Penh early this month.

The decision on the foundation of the commission was signed on December 11 by Norodom Sirivut and Sar Kheng, vice-prime ministers of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

The commission with Public Health Minister Chhea Thang as president is composed of two vice presidents and 10 members who are secretaries of state of the ministries of education, youth and sports; social affairs; information; home affairs; economics and finance; tourism; planning; foreign affairs and international cooperation; national defence; women affairs; and culture; and deputy heads of provincial and municipal administration services.

The commission is duty-bound to set up anti-AIDS measures, examine AIDS infection in Cambodia, and counsel the government, laboratories and hospitals on the situation of AIDS.

INDONESIA

Health Minister Rules Out Campaign To Encourage Condom Use

BK2512100993 Jakarta MERDEKA in Indonesian
14 Dec 93 pp 1, 11

[Excerpts] Jakarta, Monday [13 December]—Indonesia will not carry out an anti-AIDS campaign that encourages the use of condoms, as in Western countries, because this would be tantamount to legalizing free sex [preceding two words in English] and prostitution.

"As an Eastern country with our own culture, traditions, and strong religious upbringing, we will not employ such methods," Health Minister Suyudi told reporters after meeting with President Suharto at Bina Graha Palace on Monday, 13 December.

Criticism has recently been heard from ulemas, who question the methods of the anti-AIDS campaign and the recommendation that people who frequently service women use condoms. They believe that such tactics are tantamount to legalizing prostitution. [passage omitted]

According to the minister, condoms should be used to prevent the spread of AIDS, but society only approves of

this method being employed by people who are already infected with AIDS so that the disease will not be transmitted to others, such as their wives or spouses. [passage omitted]

JAPAN

Health Minister Discusses AIDS Epidemic

OW1112105793 Tokyo KYODO in English 1004 GMT
11 Dec 93

[Text] Fukui, Dec. 11 KYODO—Japan is surrounded by countries affected by AIDS, Health and Welfare Minister Keigo Ouchi said Saturday [11 December].

"All the countries around Japan are AIDS countries," Ouchi said.

"With the exception of Japan, the units that go on United Nations peacekeeping operations from other countries all come back infected with AIDS."

Ouchi, chairman of the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), made the comments in response to questions from participants at a seminar on party policy he attended at the invitation of the prefectural branch of his party in Fukui.

Ouchi said he would not name countries, but added that "many people are going overseas recently and AIDS is on the increase especially among young women."

"Japan aims to be an advanced country when it comes to medical treatment and we must conquer AIDS," Ouchi concluded.

One participant, who requested anonymity, said he thought Ouchi's comments might have "gone too far as health minister."

On November 25, the ministry's AIDS surveillance committee released its latest figures indicating that Japan had a total of 1,356 people who were either human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) carriers or had developed AIDS symptoms.

The figure does not include people infected through blood transfusions.

Tokyo To Allow AIDS Patients in for World Conference

OW2312095393 Tokyo KYODO in English 0838 GMT
23 Dec 93

[Text] Tokyo, Dec 23 KYODO—Japan will allow overseas AIDS patients and HIV carriers to enter the country to attend an international conference on AIDS to be held in Yokohama in August 1994, government sources said Thursday [23 December].

The Health and Welfare Ministry and the Justice Ministry will permit those who have been infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) to come into Japan to attend the conference, the first in Asia of its kind.

However, if attendants are proved to have once had a hand in prostitution, the ministries will refuse them entrance, the sources close to the ministries said.

About 1,000 AIDS patients and HIV carriers are expected to take part in the 10th International Conference on AIDS to be held from August 7 to 12 in Yokohama.

Organizers expect over 10,000 people from more than 140 countries to attend.

Japan's immigration law grants the government a right to refuse entrance to those who are infected with a virus and run a risk of spreading the virus among people.

The ministries, however, decided to allow HIV carriers to enter the country because their purpose of participating in the conference is clear, the sources said.

The law also enables the government to stop the entrance of those who have a background of prostitution even if they are to make speeches at the conference.

However, they can apply for special permission for entrance with the Justice Minister if they wish, they said.

Nongovernment organizations overseas have urged Japan not to shut the door to participants who have engaged in prostitution.

All previous conferences were in Europe or North America, but the organizers hope for greater Asian input next year because statistics shows AIDS cases will explode in Asia toward the end of the decade.

In Japan, there are currently over 3,000 people with AIDS, or infected with HIV, according to the Health and Welfare Ministry.

SOUTH KOREA

Court Rules Blood Supplier Responsible for HIV-Linked Death

SK2312074993 Seoul THE KOREA TIMES in English
23 Dec 93 p 3

[Text] A Seoul court has ruled that the authority which supplies blood with the HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is responsible for the infection and not the state or hospital involved.

The landmark ruling, made yesterday by the Seoul District Civil Court, is expected to have a critical impact in legislating laws and regulations pertaining to AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome).

In the ruling, the court found the Korea National Red Cross (KNRC) responsible for causing the fatal infection of a 21-year-old man identified only by his surname Yi who committed suicide after realizing that he acquired AIDS through a blood transfusion.

The infection has been confirmed to have occurred in January 1987 while Yi was undergoing a blood transfusion during surgery at the Seoul National University Hospital. He killed himself in April last year.

Following his death, Yi's family filed a civil suit against the government, the hospital and KNRC which processed and supplied the blood used in the transfusion, demanding compensation of 330 million won.

KNRC's Blood Processing Center is responsible for processing virtually all domestic blood products.

In handing down the ruling, presiding judge Kim Mok-min said neither the state nor the hospital is responsible for the accident and ordered KNRC to pay Yi's family 12 million won in compensation.

"Since the discovery of HIV here in December 1985, the government has made diligent efforts to ensure that the spread of the deadly disease is prevented," Kim noted.

He cited that the government issued strict directives for related authorities to administer stringent tests on all donated and other blood to screen it for HIV infection.

The judge went on to say that there are grounds to believe that the hospital eliminated detailed tests on the blood before the transfusion only on the basis of the fact that Yi was in serious condition.

THAILAND

Tuberculosis Treatment Aid Granted to Cambodia

BK2411090093 Bangkok Radio Thailand Network
in English 0000 GMT 24 nov 93

[Text] Thailand will provide medical aid for Cambodia. The cabinet yesterday approved the proposal by the Foreign Ministry for the provision of medicine for tuberculosis treatment worth 500,000 baht for Cambodia. Such assistance is provided on humanitarian grounds as requested by the Cambodian Government under a bilateral basis. It will also help strengthen relations between the two countries.

The Cabinet yesterday also approved the sending of a Thai military team to join the United Nations military liaison officers' team in Cambodia as requested by the United Nations. Participation of Thai soldiers in the UN team will show Thailand's stance or her policy in cooperation with the United Nations.

VIETNAM

Vo Van Kiet Writes on National Vaccination Campaign

BK2012141793 Hanoi Vietnam Television Network in Vietnamese 1215 GMT 17 Dec 93

[Excerpt] In its 17 December issue, NHAN DAN carries an appeal by Prime Minister Vo Van Kiet at a ceremony to launch a national vaccination campaign against polio and tetanus for children. The appeal says that the child vaccination work is a very important part of our activities for the protection and care of our people's health.

After reviewing vaccination activities in the past five years, the appeal continues:

On behalf of the government, I heartily welcome the governments at all levels, people in the entire country, ministries, and mass organizations—especially the public health sector, the Vietnam Women's Union, and the Red Cross Society—for their great efforts in carrying out this significant campaign. I thank all international organizations and foreign governments, especially UNICEF and WHO, for their efficient assistance in this national program.

This campaign is not carried out on a large scale, but it also has a special importance to ensure good health for our young generations who will bear the responsibility of

bringing beauty to our country and happiness to our people. In that meaning, the elimination of polio and tetanus in infants and the prevention of blindness in children should be carried out thoroughly with the best quality.

I urge the patriots in the entire country, especially mothers living in mountainous and isolated areas, to actively take part in this campaign by giving their children the full course of vaccination. [passage omitted] The government at all levels must heighten its responsibility in providing health care to the people and directly supervise this vaccination campaign. The public health sector is carrying the main responsibility in providing speciality equipment to ensure the success of this campaign with good quality and results.

I suggest that the Vietnam Women's Union, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the Red Cross Society, the Peasants Association, the Vietnam General Federation of Trade Unions, and other organizations actively encourage mothers to give vaccinations to their children. The mass media agencies will widely propagandize so that everybody can understand and enthusiastically partake in this campaign. I suggest that national and international organizations, especially UNICEF and WHO, continue providing assistance to the annual vaccination campaign for Vietnamese children's health and for Vietnamese people's happiness.

ALBANIA

Official Records Report Two Persons Infected With AIDS*AU0212211293 Tirana ATA in English 1118 GMT
2 Dec 93*

[Text] Tirana, November 2 (ATA)—Thus far official records in Albania report two persons affected with AIDS. Blood tests in 1,000 people proved to be negative, according to statistics of the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology.

Albanian TV broadcast on December 1, the international day of fight against AIDS, a program on the theme "It Is Time To Act" organized by Action Plus, calling on the public, state and non-state organizations to take preventive action and fight against AIDS. Memo Boci, coordinator of AIDS national program at the Ministry of Health, told an ATA reporter.

The risk of disseminating the disease increased over the last three years because of Albania's opening to the world. A modern laboratory operates at the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology for quick and accurate blood tests.

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Health Committee Reports Infectious Diseases Rising*AU2511164593 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina
Network in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 25 Nov 93*

[Text] The Republican Committee for Health and Social Safety of the Citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina stated that according to the information it has received from the regions of Olovo, Mostar, Teocak, Zvornik, and Sarajevo, eight people were killed and 12 wounded in the last 24 hours. Of these, one person was killed and six wounded in Sarajevo.

The threatened areas of Tesanj, Maglaj, Srebrenica, Zepa, Gorazde, Gornji Vakuf, Olovo, and Mostar need aid in food, medicines, medical accessories, winter clothing, footwear, sleeping bags, and places to live in.

The hygiene-epidemiology situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is deteriorating. Intestinal infectious diseases are on the rise. The number of respiratory disease cases is also rising.

BULGARIA

National Program for Combating AIDS Launched*AU2311201293 Sofia BTA in English 1754 GMT
23 Nov 93*

[Text] Sofia, November 23 (BTA)—According to statistics of the National Centre for Preventive Medicine, there are 121 HIV carriers registered in Bulgaria, 24 of them have developed the symptoms of the disease in full and 18 already died. There are 11 children born by HIV-positive parents but only one of them tested HIV-positive. These are data released at today's press conference devoted to December 1, World AIDS Day. The national coordinator for combating AIDS, Dr. Stanislava Popova, presented a programme for the prevention and control of AIDS. The first steps would be the holding of seminars aimed to work out the principles of a general national strategy for fighting the disease. The first one, intended for journalists writing on the problems of AIDS, opens tomorrow.

AIDS tests have been provided through the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organization, preventive research on those lines is also conducted. Condoms produced by leading companies are regularly supplied with the assistance of the World Health Organization and a number of health-care institutions and foundations. The National Centre for Preventive Medicine will insist before the government on the allocation of 140 million leva through the 1994 budget for the purchase of AIDS testing products and medical preparations for the treatment of the disease.

Statistics on Infectious Diseases*94P20174A Sofia STATISTICHESKI GODISHNIK NA
REPUBLIKA BULGARIYA in Bulgarian No 1992,
Jun 93 p 281*

[Text]

Registered Cases of Infectious Diseases

Disease	1980	1985	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Number of Cases							
Diphtheria	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	12,901	13,865	10,518	9,413	8,989	7,475	4,155
German Measles (Morbilli)	10,763	972	1,560	404	111	147	2,028
Whooping Cough	154	40	54	16	15	26	13
Rubeola	69,042	29,383	14,345	24,719	12,392	12,839	9,295
Chicken Pox	47,607	34,216	40,373	31,457	42,604	36,498	23,472
Mumps	6,523	1,170	33,628	446	107	130	129

Registered Cases of Infectious Diseases (Continued)

Disease	1980	1985	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
Number of Cases							
Influenza	243,387	78,105	13,150	39,330	57,855	12,419	3,147
Epidemic Cerebrospinal Meningitis	107	136	161	142	124	80	102
Epidemic Encephalitis	25	33	15	10	9	12	14
Infantile Paralysis	—	—	—	—	1	—	46
"Q" Fever	1	505	17	9	12	31	55
Hemorrhagic Fever	8	25	17	38	23	9	18
Malaria ¹	128	116	115	101	120	40	50n
Abdominal Typhus [Typhoid]	1	3	3	—	2	4	14
Paratyphoid	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery	8,583	6,137	5,060	3,956	3,268	5,394	6,247
Toxic Dyspepsia	20	5	1	—	—	—	—
Infectious Hepatitis	9,821	12,392	15,814	10,956	9,586	23,904	23,599
Blue Blister (Anthrax)	12	17	8	16	5	10	10
Leptospirosis	22	26	43	43	27	24	18
Tetanus	18	12	5	4	6	7	7
Serosal Meningitis	193	1,274	205	96	164	129	213
Cases per 100,000 Persons							
Diphtheria	0.0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	145.6	154.7	117.2	104.8	100.0	83.1	46.3
German Measles (Morbilli)	121.5	10.8	17.4	4.5	1.2	1.6	22.6
Whooping Cough	1.7	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1
Rubeola	779.1	327.9	159.9	275.2	137.9	142.8	103.5
Chicken Pox	537.2	381.9	450.0	350.2	473.9	406.0	261.3
Mumps	73.6	13.1	374.8	5.0	1.2	1.4	1.4
Influenza	2746.6	871.7	146.6	436.9	643.6	138.1	35.0
Epidemic Cerebrospinal Meningitis	1.2	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.4	0.9	1.1
Epidemic Encephalitis	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Infantile Paralysis	—	—	—	—	0.0	—	0.5
"Q" Fever	0.0	5.6	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.6
Hemorrhagic Fever	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.2
Malaria ¹	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.3	0.4	0.6
Abdominal Typhus [Typhoid]	0.0	0.0	0.0	—	0.0	0.0	0.2
Paratyphoid	—	0.0	—	—	—	—	—
Dysentery	96.9	68.5	56.4	44.0	36.4	60.0	69.6
Toxic Dyspepsia	0.2	0.1	0.0	—	—	—	—
Infectious Hepatitis	110.8	138.3	176.3	122.0	106.6	265.9	262.7
Blue Blister (Anthrax)	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Leptospirosis	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2
Tetanus	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Serosal Meningitis	2.2	14.2	2.3	1.1	1.8	1.4	2.4

¹All cases involve infection while visiting outside Bulgaria.

Funding for Health Care, Viral Hepatitis Outbreak Reported*AU1412093793 Sofia BTA in English 2132 GMT
13 Dec 93*

["Today"—BTA lead]

[Excerpts] Sofia, December 13 (BTA) [passage omitted] The social security reform will be postponed for next year since the National Assembly is unlikely to pass the bills that have been introduced, Iliyan Shotlekov, deputy chairman of the parliamentary Labour and Social Affairs Committee, told a news conference on the committee's work in 1994. The funds budgeted for social and health security in 1994 will constitute 17 percent of the GDP [gross domestic product], according to committee's Deputy Chairman Nikola Koychev. [passage omitted]

Minister of Health Tancho Gugalov and World Health Organization's coordinator for Europe Keis Hoos opened today in Bankya (near Sofia) an international conference on the problems of drug trafficking and drug addicts in Central and Eastern Europe. The conference gathered experts from 11 countries and observers from Britain and Greece. They will discuss the establishment of a common control system, BTA learned from Associated Professor Filip Lazarov who chaired today's sitting. [passage omitted]

Higher frequency of viral hepatitis has been identified in some parts of Bulgaria, particularly in the Kyustendil (southwestern Bulgaria) and Vidin (northwestern Bulgaria) regions. Cases with viral hepatitis totalled 38 in the November 1-December 15 period, as during the past week only their number in the Vidin region reached 6. The competent authorities have undertaken measures to curb the outbreak. [passage omitted]

Birth Rate Drop, Infant Mortality Reported*AU0812142593 Sofia BTA in English 1220 GMT 8 Dec 93*

[Text] Sofia, December 8 (BTA)—A total of 96,522 Bulgarians were born in 1992 and 138,705 abortions were performed over the same period, statistics of the National Health Prophylaxis Centre show. The results of a related survey were made public yesterday, TRUD writes.

There are 2.169 million Bulgarian women of a child-bearing age, the survey specifies, but the number of those willing to have a child is on the decrease. A total of 1,443 abortions were performed per 1,000 live births, or 500 up on 1991.

Infant mortality is very high. In towns it was 15.4 per 1,000 population in 1992, that figure being 17 in villages.

Statisticians hold the Bulgarian nation dwindles not by the year but by the month.

Doctors' Union Says Health Care in 'Tragic' State*AU1710203693 Sofia BTA in English 1944 GMT
17 Oct 93*

["Today"—BTA lead]

[Excerpts] Sofia, October 17 (BTA)—The Fifth Conference of the Bulgarian Doctors' Union ended in the Danubian city of Ruse today. It adopted a declaration addressed to the Bulgarian nation, saying that Bulgarian health care is in a tragic state, the responsibility for which is shared by parliament, its health care committee and the executive. [passage omitted]

POLAND**Hepatitis Epidemic Reported in Przemysl Province***LD2012173193 Warsaw TV Polonia Network in Polish
1600 GMT 20 Dec 93*

[Text] Hepatitis is raging in Przemysl Province. One person has died in the contagious diseases ward at a hospital in Jaroslaw, and 45 people are being hospitalized suffering of this viral inflammation of the liver. A state of epidemiological alert has been declared in the province. Self-service has been banned in food shops. Unpasteurized milk and its products have been withdrawn from sale. Sanitary measures have been stepped up in nurseries, schools, and canteens.

SLOVAKIA**Food Determined as Origin of East Slovak Jaundice Epidemic***AU1712174993 Prague CTK in English 1539 GMT
17 Dec 93*

[Text] Kosice, east Slovakia, Dec 17 (CTK)— The explosive epidemic of jaundice is the result of mass contamination of food, a member of the district anti-epidemiological unit said today.

The total number of patients receiving treatment for hepatitis A symptoms this morning was 380.

The range of food stuffs under suspicion is narrowing, epidemiologists says. The contagion is no longer thought to have originated from Kosice's water, dairies, bakeries, or from poultry, meat or fish producers. Public health officials are, however, examining produce sold at market. They will not yet name the producers under suspicion for fear of unjustly harming their trade.

In view of the rapid spread of epidemic the City Council closed all primary and secondary schools on December 15.

Jaundice 'Epidemic' Breaks Out in Kosice, Schools Closed

AU1412185593 Prague CTK in English 1524 GMT
14 Dec 93

[Text] Prague/Kosice, east Slovakia, Dec 14 (CTK)—A jaundice epidemic has broken out in Kosice, where currently 150 patients with hepatitis symptoms are being treated in the town's clinic. A Ministry of Health specialist told CTK, however, that there was no risk of epidemic in the Czech Republic.

"The situation is ominous," Bartolomej Magyar, a senior consultant at the infection clinic of the Louis Pasteur Hospital in Kosice told the east Slovak daily SLOVENSKY VYCHOD today.

In the week from December 6-13, 98 people suffering from jaundice were recorded in the Kosice region and yesterday 150 patients were being treated in the infection clinic, the daily reported.

"We experienced a similar jaundice epidemic in this town fourteen years ago," he said, adding that certain departments had to be closed to free beds for the treatment of hepatitis sufferers.

In Prague, the director of the Hygiene Department of the Ministry of Health, Jana Foltinova, moved to calm fears of a similar occurrence in this country. She said the number of hepatitis patients was not growing. This year 698 cases of hepatitis A have been recorded, compared to 626 last year and 690 the year before. There have so far been 551 cases of hepatitis B, fewer than last year (673) and the year before (756).

Foltinova described the outbreak in Kosice as a local phenomenon and said that a Czech public health officer was studying the situation in Slovakia and would officially report to the press on Thursday [16 December].

The precise cause of the Kosice epidemic has not been determined but it is assumed to be water. However, since a high proportion of entrepreneurs and the better-off figure among the patients, some speculate that the cause might be expensive foodstuffs, SLOVENSKY VYCHOD reports.

All primary and secondary schools in the Kosice region will be closed as from tomorrow, the Town Council decided today in response to the rapid spread of hepatitis A. According to local public health officials a total of 227 cases of jaundice had been recorded until this morning. Since the infections departments of the Louis Pasteur Faculty Hospital and at the Children's Hospital have no more beds to spare, light cases are now being treated in the dormitory of the secondary nursing school.

Slovak Soldiers Not Hurt by Gas in Gulf

AU3011092093 Prague CTK in English 2018 GMT
29 Nov 93

[Text] Prague, Nov 29 (CTK)—No physical or mental problems have been detected among the Slovak soldiers who had been involved within the Czechoslovak anti-chemical unit in the 1991 Desert Storm operation, Chairman of the Slovak Army health service Stanislav Pirošik said today.

He reacted to the information published in Czech media on the damaged health of the Czechoslovak anti-chemical unit troops. He said that his statements were based on evidence from direct participants of the operation according to whom the unit had measured low levels of unspecified chemical substances.

YUGOSLAVIA

Official Records Report 21 Cases of AIDS

AU0812205693 Skopje MIC in English 8 Dec 93

[Unattributed report: "Official Records of AIDS"]

[Text] According to the official records, up till today, 10 cases of AIDS and 11 seropositive cases have been registered in Macedonia. Of them, seven died with the various clinical manifestations of the virus and three died not as a result of the virus.

Sixteen of them are males and five females. Six are from various towns throughout Macedonia, while the rest are from Skopje.

With the exception of one hemophiliac, the rest got the virus through sexual contacts, through already seropositive parents, or through needles while using drugs.

The largest number of them obtained the virus outside of Macedonia even though there are cases where some were infected with the virus in Macedonia.

Hepatitis Reported in Krusevo

94WE0101B Skopje NOVA MAKEDONIJA in Macedonian
17 Nov 93 p 5

[Article by A.D.: "Thirty-One Children Sick With Hepatitis"]

[Text] Krusevo, 16 November—Today, the Health Home in Krusevo informed us that in eight township settlements 31 children had contracted contagious hepatitis. Since March, the epidemiological service has recorded cases of hepatitis in the following settlements: Pusta Reka, Dolno Divjaci, Zitose, Sazdevo, Borino, Norovo, Bucin, and Krusevo. The most important factor contributing to the spreading of the disease in the shortage of water for personal hygiene, especially in schools and other child centers.

Brucellosis Reported in Kicevo Area

94WE0101A Skopje NOVA MAKEDONIJA in Macedonian
17 Nov 93 p 5

[Article by V.Z.: "Threat of Brucellosis"]

[Text] *This year, 11 citizens contracted the disease, while veterinarians destroyed 139 head of contaminated cattle.*

Kicevo, November—Once again, the Kicevo livestock breeders are disturbed by the outbreak of brucellosis, a contagious disease. Tests conducted so far have confirmed that the disease has already spread to several herds of sheep in Zajas and Kolari villages. In the last 10 months, 11 cases of brucellosis in humans have been recorded in the Kicevo township, while veterinarians have destroyed 139 sick sheep.

The spreading of brucellosis in the Kicevo area is confirmed by Ace Delovski, director of the veterinary station in Kicevo. According to him, brucellosis is destroying the Kicevo herds. So far, the Kicevo veterinarians have tested 16,429 sheep in the township, and all contaminated sheep have been destroyed. He stressed that the township veterinarians have declared war on this disease, which threatens human health as well. According to Delovski, a special program has been formulated to block the spread of the disease, requiring coordinated veterinary efforts. Wherever the disease is detected the cattle is destroyed and its owners are compensated on the basis of market value.

According to Mirce Lazeski, head of the epidemiological service of the Kicevo Medical Center, all contaminated individuals are livestock breeders who in direct contact with the animals.

Contagious Diseases Kill 208 in Kosovo This Year

AU2812155093 Pristina KOSOVA DAILY REPORT
No 259 in English 27 Dec 93

[Unattributed report: "208 Victims of Contagious Diseases in Kosova Within This Year"—issued by the Democratic League of Kosova]

[Text] The Prishtina-based Serbian newspaper JEDINSTVO reports in its today's edition that during this year only, some 18,836 persons in Kosova have suffered contagious diseases. Some 30 epidemics and 8 contagious diseases have been prevailing amongst the population causing thus 208 deaths. These figures present only the cases registered in the public health care (Serb run, KIC) institutions, whereas the real figures may be five-fold higher as the vast majority of the population gets treated at private medical centers and homes, says the newspaper.

The most frequent diseases the Kosovars have been suffering are jaundice, tuberculosis, measles, hepatitis, pleurisy, infant palsy, scarlet fever etc., with children being hit mostly.

Fifty-Two New Cases of Jaundice Registered Last Week

AU0612205493 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina
Network in Serbo-Croatian 1800 GMT 6 Dec 93

[Text] Fifty-two new cases of jaundice were registered in Sarajevo last week. The highest number of new patients were registered in Stari Grad Commune. A total of 1,406 cases have been registered in Sarajevo since the beginning of the jaundice epidemic.

EU Supplies Diphtheria, Tetanus Vaccines, Tuberculin Tests

94WE0101C Skopje NOVA MAKEDONIJA
in Macedonian 10 Nov 93 p 8

[Article by L.M.: "Some Needed Vaccines Received"]

[Text] *The Ministry of Health expects that the received quantities will meet the need for diphtheria and tetanus vaccines and tuberculin tests for the balance of this year.*

Part of the needed mandatory immunization vaccines arrived yesterday, provided by the European Union. According to the Ministry of Health, the amounts received will be sufficient to meet requirements for the balance of the year for diphtheria and tetanus vaccines, administered to children over eight, who were not vaccinated so far for a variety of reasons. Furthermore, it is expected that part of this aid will meet the need for tuberculin tests for the last quarter of the year, used for children in the first and eighth grades, who received the BCG vaccine. The test will establish whether they will have to be revaccinated.

The vaccines are to be distributed in the next few days among the medical centers, based on their requests. As to the other vaccines in short supply, for mumps, smallpox, and whooping cough, the Ministry of Health expects their arrival by the end of the month.

Three Starve in Teslic, Hospital Situation 'Dramatic'

AU2311161393 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina
Network in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 23 Nov 93

[Text] People have started dying of starvation on the free territory of Teslic. So far three have died of starvation and exhaustion. Only one truck with food has come to this free territory in the last seven months. The situation is particularly dramatic in the hospital. The Teslic Information Center reports that there is no food, medicine, or heating.

Health Authorities Issue Bulletin on Casualties, Diseases

AU0312125593 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina
Network in Serbo-Croatian 1100 GMT 3 Dec 93

[Text] How the aggressor is observing the signed agreements in practice is best illustrated by the bullet of the Republican Institute for Health Protection for the past week.

The aggressors killed 60 and wounded 167 citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the past week. Despite the fact that they signed agreements, the aggressors from both the east and the west are not allowing the food convoys to pass through. The most endangered regions are still Tesanj, Maglaj, Gorazde, Mostar, Olovo, and Gornji Vakuf. In addition to food, they need clothing, footwear, and facilities for accommodating refugees and the displaced persons.

The epidemiologic situation on the territory of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina remains (?unfavorable). In the first 10 months of this year, 26,261 persons were registered to have infectious diseases.

Health Center Puts Total Death Toll at 'Over 141,000'

AU1412154193 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina
Network in Serbo-Croatian 1400 GMT 14 Dec 93

[Text] What follows now is this week's black Bosnia-Herzegovina statistics.

According to the latest report from the Bosnia-Herzegovina Health Headquarters, during the last week 66 people were killed and 255 were wounded in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Sarajevo, 21 were killed and 118 wounded during this period.

Based on information gathered from about 70 percent of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina, over 141,000 people have been killed since the outbreak of the war, and 158,651 people have been wounded. In Sarajevo alone, 9,612 people have been killed and 55,021 wounded.

As for medical treatment abroad, 1,171 patients are waiting to be evacuated from Bosnia-Herzegovina. So far 606 people have been evacuated. There are 1,312 people on the evacuation waiting list in Sarajevo, and so far 446 patients have been evacuated, according to the statement by the Bosnia-Herzegovina Health Headquarters.

Serbia: Embargo Impairs Health Care Conditions

AU2611170093 Belgrade VECERNJE NOVOSTI
in Serbo-Croatian 20 Nov 93 p 10

[D. Minic report: "The Winter—a New Challenge"]

[Text] This winter the Yugoslavs will experience the sanctions in their full harshness, while our health will be the first to suffer the consequences of the sanctions. The

experts of the Belgrade Institute for Health Care anticipate an increased number of those suffering from the infections of the respiratory organs, because of inadequate clothing and bad heating.

Influenza, a respiratory infection, whose spreading is particularly benefited by closed rooms, such as are usually found in firms, is this year assisted by some new circumstances: A new sort of virus, but also a new sort of closed room—the vehicles of public transportation. Only a small step divides influenza from pneumonia, which is the major complication, particularly in the case of the elderly, who chronically suffer from such diseases....

Flu Contracted on a Bus [subhead]

Epidemiologists forecast that the overcrowding of schools and institutions of collective accommodation will result in an increase in cases of streptococcus infections, as well as of food poisoning, because, in the meantime, the systematic control of the production, transportation, and conservation of food supplies has ceased. An insufficient and low-quality nutrition brings about a general deterioration of the immunity of citizens.

Some bleak forecasts have already come true: In the last two years in our capital there has been a growing number of mental, contagious, and so called insufficiently defined diseases, that is to say, cases without diagnosis.

"In the period prior to the sanctions, that is from 1986 to 1990, the number of those who died of contagious diseases was 213 on average, two years later it was 272 (27 percent more), while in the first quarter of this year as much as four times more cases of death have been reported, relative to last year. The reason for worry lies with the fact that people are even dying of diseases that are normally quite curable if a correct therapy is implemented. This is to say, the main problem is the lack of medicines," Professor Dr. Svetislav Ristic, head of the Epidemiologic Department at the Federal Institute for Health Care, says.

Prof. Dr. Teodor Bakovic, director of the aforementioned institute, says that the number of newly registered patients suffering from active tuberculosis has increased by 8.6 percent, as well as the number of those suffering from psychosis, which has increased by 3.8 percent. This figure refers only to the cases registered by general practitioners.

The analysis of autopsy reports in the period prior to the imposition of the UN sanctions and after it, speaks convincingly for how endangered the health of Yugoslav citizens is.

"The cases of infections have considerably increased in the time of the sanctions, particularly cases of pneumonia and sepsis as causes of death. In the period before the implementation of the sanctions, there were 20 percent of such cases, while after the implementation, the number of such cases has jumped to 42 percent.

Before the embargo, infections as causes of death were reported in 31 percent of all death cases, while afterwards in almost 58 percent of cases," Prof. Dr. Vladimir Kanjuh from the Institute for Pathology with the Faculty for Medical Sciences, says.

Diagnosis—Unknown [subhead]

Since the sanctions were implemented, the number of accurate diagnosis has sunk considerably. Until the end of 1992, 42 percent of diagnosis were correct, 39 percent were partly correct, while 19 percent were incorrect. With the deterioration of the conditions in the health care institutions, only 27 percent of diagnosis have been proven correct, 38 percent partly, while as much as 35 percent have been proven incorrect!

There are many reasons for that: The reduced number of regular medical checkups, the lack of diagnostic instruments and medicines, problems in the field of disinfection and disinfestation....

Among the most frequent causes of death, apart from "traditional" diseases, the violent forms of death (suicides, murders, accidents) have also found their place on the scale. After a long time, anemia (poor condition of blood) has reappeared as one of the most frequent diseases, as a consequence of inadequate nutrition. We are no longer safe from diseases that can be prevented (by a vaccine), because the number of children immunized by the DI-TE-PER [against diphtheria, tetanus, and perioritis] has dropped from 88 to 70 percent, while those vaccinated against chicken pox have dropped from 88 to 76 percent, partly because of the shortage, partly because of malfunctions, and partly because of the difficulties of transport. All age groups are endangered, without distinction, while the prospects for the future are even worse. The study worked out by Dr. Viktorija Cucic stresses, among other things, that the conditions for carrying out scientific research will be reduced by 64 percent, the possibilities for specialization will drop by 61 percent, the chances for providing basic medicines by 46 percent, while conditions for keeping up the hygienic-epidemiologic level in health care institutions will be reduced by 38 percent. The consequence of these changes will be a decline in the birth rate, an increase in the infant mortality-rate, an increase in cases of cardiovascular diseases, ulcers, mental disorders, diabetes, tuberculosis....

The conclusion is quite unambiguous: Either the sanctions are lifted in the field of medicine, or we shall die out. All age groups are endangered, without distinction while the prospects for the future are even worse. The study worked out by Dr. Viktorija Cucic stresses, among other things, that the conditions for carrying out scientific research will be reduced by 64 percent, the possibilities for specialization will drop by 61 percent, the chances for providing basic medicines by 46 percent, while conditions for keeping up the hygienic-epidemiologic level in health care institutions will be reduced by 38 percent. The consequence of these changes will be a decline in the birth rate, an increase in the infant mortality-rate, an increase in cases of cardiovascular diseases, ulcers, mental disorders, diabetes, tuberculosis....

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Federal Ministry Report: Sanctions 'Highly Damaging' to Health Care

AU2511092493 Paris AFP in English 0813 GMT
25 Nov 93

[Text] Belgrade, Nov 25 (AFP)—Sanctions imposed against the rump Yugoslavia in 1990 have proved highly damaging to health care, according to a Health Ministry statement published in the daily BORBA.

The death rate in hospitals has risen by up to 30 percent since the introduction of sanctions, the statement said.

Statistics from the Yugoslav Institute for Preventative Medicine showed that cases of chicken pox had risen from 694 in the first half of last year to 14,940 in the same period this year, of which 44 were fatal.

Belgrade's Tirsova Children's Hospital, which operated on 500 children with heart defects last year, could this year manage only 150 operations. Clinic Director Dusan Scepanovic said: "Children will die waiting for their turn."

Infant mortality has risen from 1.4 percent in 1991 to 1.7 percent during the first six months of this year, the statement said.

By April, Serbia was spending annually only 20 dollars per resident on health care compared to 150 dollars in 1983.

ARGENTINA

Tests on Cuban Meningitis Vaccine Announced

PY2411141393 Buenos Aires CLARIN in Spanish
20 Nov 93 p 42

[Article by Paulo Andalo]

[Excerpt] The government confirmed on 19 November that before the end of the year a pilot test will be held to study the efficiency of the Cuban vaccine against meningitis in our country.

The test will be made on 100,000 volunteers younger than six. The test possibly will concentrate in La Pampa, the province in which the disease has caused more deaths so far. The tests will begin in a few days after the arrival of the vaccine shipments from Cuba. The vaccines already have been approved in other countries like Chile.

Moises Spitz, director of the Malbran Institute, which is in charge of making the tests, told CLARIN: "Blood samples will be taken first from those who will be vaccinated, who will be children younger than six for the most part, who are the most badly affected group. There are more doubts about the efficiency of the vaccine at this age. Youths up to 14 years old also will be vaccinated." [passage omitted]

Agreement Signed With Brazil, Paraguay To Combat Cholera

PY2311185593 Buenos Aires Radio Nacional Network
in Spanish 1600 GMT 23 Nov 93

[Text] Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay will combat cholera jointly. A few hours ago they signed an agreement by which the three countries commit themselves to a permanent exchange of epidemiological information, within the framework of the campaigns to prevent and struggle against cholera.

Officials from the three countries also admitted the necessity of integrating the three borders in order to prevent the cholera disease from spreading.

BARBADOS

Mosquito Eradication Stepped Up To Combat Dengue Fever

FL2611234493 Bridgetown CANA in English
1746 GMT 26 Nov 93

[By Pamela Gill]

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, Nov 26, CANA—Barbados, trying to control an outbreak of the mosquito-borne disease dengue fever, has 13 confirmed cases, senior medical officer Dr. Ronald Knight reported Friday.

Dr Knight told CANA at least 100 people have been tested for the disease. He added that over the past week, one or two persons have been coming forward daily to be tested.

"We have already had 100 cases for confirmation and out of that 100, we have had 13 confirmed cases. The people that are coming forward are those who feel they are displaying symptoms of the disease and are requesting confirmation of the disease," Dr Knight said.

The senior medical officer said that while there have been general reports of the disease around the island, the outbreak is increasingly being reported in larger heavily populated areas.

"Generally, the majority of cases are being reported in the areas of St. Michael, St. James, and to a lesser extent Christ Church, and these areas will obviously be the focus of the eradication programme," he said.

Against this backdrop, Dr Knight said the Ministry of Health was stepping up its eradication and control programme to stem the spread of the disease.

He said: "We are targetting households in those affected area with the objective of cleanin up those areas where the mosquitoes are likely to breed. We are also stepping up our public education drive to sensitise the general public about the disease."

The senior medical officer expressed optimism about controlling the outbreak.

"I am very optimistic, that we will be able to control this outbreak and that it will not last for very long," he said. He added that Barbados had had previous outbreaks of the disease which did not last very long.

Dr. Knight attributed the outbreak to some extent on the "rainy season," noting that an outbreak of dengue fever and other communicable diseases often coincide with the rainy season in the Caribbean.

BELIZE

Health Memorandum of Understanding Signed With Mexico

FL2511220393 Bridgetown CANA in English
2035 GMT 25 Nov 93

[Text] Belize City, Nov 25, CANA—Belize and Mexico this week signed a memorandum of understanding on health. The memorandum relates to medical emergencies and high-complexity illnesses.

The memorandum was signed at the start of a meeting of health officials from Mexico, Guatemala, and Belize. The memorandum states that the general hospital in Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico will be made available to Belizeans who need emergency medical care.

Under the agreement, the health care for medical emergencies and high complexity pathologies to persons referred by the Belize Ministry of Health will be delivered according to the physical capacity of the general hospital.

Belizean patients, the memorandum stated, will be charged according to their socioeconomic capacity and will be responsible for costs and expenses incurred for lodging and boarding while being treated in Chetumal. Persons unable to pay for the medical attention would still have access to the treatment and the Mexican Government would take on full responsibility for the payment of the treatment.

The Belizean and Mexican health officials agreed that if a Belizean patient cannot be attended at Chetumal's general hospital, he will be referred to other health facilities in the state of Quintana Roo or other hospitals in Mexico.

Speaking at the start of the meeting, Belize's prime minister, Manuel Esquivel, said his government's health policy recognises health as a basic human right and a fundamental part of the development process.

"The policy accepts that it is government's responsibility to ensure that every Belizean has access to the best level of health care available, appropriate for his or her health needs, regardless of ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and political or geographic distinctions," Esquivel said.

BRAZIL

Researchers Seek To Decrease Pediatric AIDS

94WE0124A Sao Paulo GAZETA MERCANTIL
in Portuguese 30 Nov 93 p 3

[Article by Sandra Gomide]

[Text] Sao Paulo—Nearly 20 percent of North American children of mothers carrying the AIDS virus are born infected with the disease. In Brazil, this rate is almost 35 percent, resembling that in the African countries. However, it is known that half of all the children infected worldwide contract the virus at the time of delivery. Based on this information, researchers are attempting to reduce the number of pediatric AIDS cases.

"If we succeed in obtaining a method to prevent transmission of the virus, the result will be good, because these children are still developing their immune system, and hence have less resistance to the infections caused by the disease." This statement was made by the Indian physician, Savita Pahwa, an immunologist at North Shore University Hospital, in New York. She arrived in Sao Paulo yesterday to participate in the First National Meeting on Pediatric AIDS, from 1 to 3 December, sponsored by the Association To Assist Child Carriers of HIV.

According to Doctor Pahwa, there are, basically two clinical types of children carrying HIV: those who show symptoms of the disease during the first months of life, and die by age two; and those who more easily resist infections, and even survive up to age 12. She explained: "We are studying the immune systems of those children to learn the differences between them, and why some manage to live longer."

Concurrently, the researchers on her team are attempting to solve what they call the virus "envelope." It consists of a layer of protein covering the virus, which determines the type of attack that the latter will make on the immune system of infected patients. According to Pahwa, approximately 1,200 children have already been infected by the virus in the United States.

The principal treatments used in Brazil are not much different from those in the developed countries, which use AZT alone, or combined with two other more modern drugs called DDI (dideoxynosine, in English) and DDC (dideoxycytidine). This system changes the date for starting the use of AZT, as well as its dosage.

According to Doctor Marinella Della Negra, from the Emilio Ribas Hospital in Sao Paulo, Brazil was the first developing country admitted to the protocol for Penta I research (the acronym for the accord regarding the European Economic Community's Pediatric AIDS Studies). That accord includes collaborating institutions in Italy, Portugal, Belgium, France, and Germany.

The doctor claims: "That is one of the most modern European studies, and from now on we shall be able to gain access to its reports." Currently receiving seven new pediatric AIDS cases per week, she comments: "Three years ago, the average was two per week."

Country Ranked Fourth in Number of AIDS Victims

94WE0124B Sao Paulo GAZETA MERCANTIL
in Portuguese 2 Dec 93 p 3

[Text] Yesterday, during a ceremony marking the World Day To Combat AIDS, Health Minister Henrique Santillo announced that, during 1994, funds totaling \$160 million would be released to combat and prevent AIDS. The funding is from the World Bank (IBRD), and the Brazilian Government's matching contribution will be \$90 million. The program will have a duration of four years.

Santillo reported that agreements are being signed with states, some municipalities, and nongovernmental organizations for the new phase of the program to fight AIDS in Brazil.

Every day, nearly 5,000 persons in the world are infected with the HIV virus. The disease has already afflicted 14 million people, and of that total over 2 million show signs of the infection. With more than 43,000 cases

recorded during the past 11 years, Brazil is the fourth-ranking country for numbers of victims. As of last month, deaths caused by AIDS reached over 18,000.

The ministry is distributing 18 million condoms to the population. The total cost of the campaign was \$100,000.

AIDS Coordinator Projects Future AIDS Figures

94WE0124C Brasilia CORREIO BRAZILIENSE
in Portuguese 2 Dec 93 p 9

[Text] The AIDS virus has now stricken 13 million adults and a million children worldwide: 2.5 million people have AIDS. World Health Organization (WHO) projections indicate that, by the end of the 1990's, there will be 43 million infected people in the world. Moreover, 10 million children will be left orphans of parents who were victims of the disease. "AIDS is one of the most serious problems confronted by the human race," declared Lair Guerra de Macedo, coordinator of the Health Ministry's Program To Fight AIDS, yesterday. She spoke during the course of the World Day To Combat AIDS program, in which health ministers have participated since 1985, when the program was created.

In Brazil, the statistics from 1980 until 30 October of this year show an accumulation of 43,964 AIDS cases, revealing that 41 percent of those infected have already died. There are 420,000 Brazilians with HIV. It is expected that, during the next two years, 87,000 new cases will appear, and that there will be 85,000 deaths resulting from the disease. According to estimates, within the same period the government will spend \$875 million on patients in an advanced stage alone. Lair claimed that the government will attempt to reduce the infection levels over the next three years, based on a comprehensive AIDS control program financed by the World Bank. The program cost is \$250 million, with \$90 million in matching funds from the Brazilian Government.

According to Lair Guerra, a striking feature in Brazil is the spread of the disease among various population groups, such as women and young people. The expert warned: "The use of injectable drugs is playing a preponderant role in the spread of the disease among the youth." In 1980, there were 28 cases among adolescents; and in 1991, 261 cases were recorded, with 50 percent infected through drug use. During the government's informational campaign disseminated by radio and television, it had been planned to air a video instructing the drug user on how to disinfect needles and syringes, but the film was banned. Two films will be aired promoting the use of condoms, and there will be two radio spots providing information on the disease.

Rio Meningitis Cases Exceed Forecasts

94WE0124D Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese
3 Dec 93 p 13

[Text] During November, the cases of meningococcal meningitis in Rio exceeded the maximum limit anticipated. According to the Municipal Health Secretariat, 48 cases were reported, representing 37 percent more than the 35 cases of the disease expected for the month. The number of fatalities during November rose to 12 with the death, on the night before last, of the child J., aged one year, who was confined in the Salgado Filho Hospital. According to the Secretariat, the baby's parents live in the shantytown of Jacarezinho.

Despite the spread of the meningococcal disease in Rio, the Secretariat denies the existence of an epidemic, because he does not believe that there has been a significant change in the number of reports of the disease compared with previous years. Most of the cases of meningococcal meningitis in Rio have been caused by the Type B meningococcus, characterized by a slow spread. It is unlike types A and C, which are capable of causing very intense epidemics within a short period of time.

Compared with last year's reports, however, the figures on the meningococcal disease in Rio indicate an abnormal rise in at least five months: February (increase of 50 percent); March (105 percent); April (43 percent); September (56 percent); and November (37 percent). Nevertheless, during August and October the number of cases was nearly 30 percent lower than that recorded for those months in 1992. The total number of cases reported to date has already exceeded that of last year's cases: 392 by November, compared with 328 last year.

For this reason, the Municipal Health Secretariat requested of the Health Ministry authorization to administer the vaccine against type B meningococcal meningitis in Rio. The effectiveness of that vaccine is a controversial topic among the experts.

Deaths From January to November Total 142

The State Health Secretariat's data indicate that by November, in the state as a whole, the meningococcal meningitis cases exceeded the total reported in 1992. To date, the Secretariat has recorded 725 cases of the disease, compared with 702 last year. This represents an approximate increase of 3 percent, not counting the figure for the month of December. The disease, which killed 153 persons in 1992, caused 142 fatalities among its victims by November of this year.

When added to those of other types of meningitis (such as the ones caused by Haemophilus influenzae, pneumococcus, and viruses), the total cases this year number 2,209, versus 2,422 last year. Yesterday, in Rio, the Municipal Health Secretariat recorded another case of type A meningococcal disease. The victim, L., aged 11 months, lives in Jacarepagua, and is confined in a private clinic.

MEXICO**Salinas Cites Progress in Health Care in State of the Nation Address**

PA0211024593

[Excerpt] In the past year, we opened 12 general hospitals and 215 first aid clinics. This means that during my administration we inaugurated a new hospital every three weeks and a first aid clinic every day during my five years in government. Following the expansion and refurbishment of the 20 de Noviembre Regional Hospital in Liste, it has become a high specialty hospital center, which will have the most modern medical equipment.

Last year I reported that the vaccine program was able to inoculate 95 percent of the Mexican children under the age of five with all vaccinations. To maintain the high coverage levels attained, we applied more than 88 million doses in 1993. During National Health Week, last October, a total of 22 million children received the measles vaccine. Some 8 million children received treatment against parasites, and vitamins were given to 1 million children under the age of five, which is a very important step for their physical development. Since October 1990, we have not had a single case of poliomyelitis. We will shortly obtain international recognition for the eradication of this disease.

The last case of diphtheria was recorded in 1991. Measles and whooping cough are showing significant reductions of 80 and 75 percent, respectively, when compared to 1988 levels. I reiterate that these results are unprecedented in Mexico's public health history. We also have been able to make progress in the achievement of the goals set for the year 2000 at the World Children's Summit. All of this is the result of the work and coverage achieved by our health institutions, as well as by the great sense of responsibility shown by Mexican families.

AIDS has become one of the primary causes of death among the male population between the ages of 25 and 34. It is necessary to insist that there is no vaccine against AIDS or treatment to cure it. He who contracts AIDS is condemned to death. This dramatic fact forces us to intensify even more our education campaigns, the dissemination of messages, and the verification of blood

banks to prevent it from spreading. I reiterate we are going to double our prevention campaigns.

In 1993, less than 8,000 cases of malaria were reported as compared to the more than 16,000 cases the previous year. No deaths for this cause have been reported. The new National Council for the Prevention and Control of Diarrhea conducted educational campaigns in the media, a total of 40 million oral rehydration doses were distributed, and efforts in the clean water program were intensified. Some 94 percent of drinking water was chlorinated. In addition, a total of 150,000 health facilities were built.

All of these actions have helped reduce the rate of mortality from diarrhea in children under the age of five by more than 30 percent since 1990. We have been able to get cholera under control, even though we still have to periodically treat isolated outbreaks.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS**Medical Official Reports 40 Cases of AIDS Since 1984**

FL0412000193 Bridgetown CANA in English
1941 GMT 3 Dec 93

[Text] Basseterre, St. Kitts, Dec 3, CANA—St. Kitts and Nevis' chief medical officer [CMO], Dr. Thomas Jones, says the federation has recorded 40 cases of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) since 1984.

There were 25 males with aids and 15 females. Twenty-five persons died.

The CMO said that three new cases were reported to the authorities in 1993.

Dr. Jones assured the population that the country's blood supply was safe as all 262 persons who had donated blood were negative.

He called on residents to change their sex behavioural pattern.

He referred to youths, who a recent survey showed engage in sexual activity at an early age.

He described heterosexual activity as the main mode of transmission of the disease.

INDIA

380 Cases of Jaundice Reported in Ahmedabad

94WE0114A Madras THE HINDU in English
24 Nov 93 p 7

[Text] Ahmedabad, Nov 23—The entire walled city of Ahmedabad has been declared jaundice-affected and its suburbs face the threat of the epidemic, which has affected at least 380 persons and claimed three lives.

The declaration to be gazetted empowers the health authorities to force residents to replace leaky domestic water supply lines. The root-cause for the outbreak of the epidemic is contamination of water supply by sewage.

Plans To Eradicate Leprosy Announced

94WE0115A Madras THE HINDU in English
17 Nov 93 p 6

[Text] New Delhi, Nov 16—The Health Ministry will get a Rs. 300 crore soft loan from the World Bank for its national leprosy eradication programme. With this, the Government hopes to bring all of its yet-to-be-covered 66 endemic districts under multi-drug therapy and focus on the need for the rehabilitation of cured patients.

Giving this information at the annual meeting of the voluntary organisations and state leprosy officers, the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Mr B. Shankarananda, said an increase of 35 per cent in the grant-in-aid would be given to the voluntary organisations involved in the programme. As many as 285 voluntary organisations and NGOs are enlisted for this programme.

Of the 201 districts in the country which have been identified as endemic for leprosy having more than five cases per 1000 population, 135 districts have been brought under the multi-drug therapy. Besides, there are 77 districts which are moderately endemic having two to five cases per 1000 population.

While opening the two-day conference here, the Minister admitted to "having miles to go" before achieving the target of eradication of leprosy by 2000, even though there are about one million leprosy cases in the country which is one-fourth of 1981-82. Though the discharge of cured patients is more than twice the number of new cases, each year another three to four lakh new cases are being added.

Rehabilitation problem: On rehabilitation, he called upon voluntary agencies to play a more active role. "As more and more patients are being treated, the problem of their proper rehabilitation in society is becoming more visible and acute. It is therefore essential to work out and initiate an appropriate rehabilitation programme. For the leprosy afflicted patients of the poor sections of society, social rehabilitation has little meaning unless accompanied by economic resettlement."

The Health Secretary, Mr. R.L. Misra, said several good projects in rehabilitation were not accepted in the past because of the confusion on whether rehabilitation was the responsibility of Ministry of Welfare or Health. Since Mr Shankarananda's taking over in July 1993, it has been decided to entrust rehabilitation to the Health Ministry.

Dr A.K. Mukherjee, Director-General of Health Services, said it was possible to reduce the incidence of leprosy by 41 per cent in the last decade due to the multi-drug treatment which had shortened the duration of treatment.

India has been playing an important role in developing and testing immuno-therapeutic and immuno-prophylactic agents for leprosy eradication. Leprosy vaccine is a distinct research goal and an area of high research priority.

Poultry Disease Epidemic Decimates Stock

94WE0113A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 8 Nov 93 pp 1, 17

[Article by Naresh Fernandes: "Poultry Epidemic in Country: Consumers To Bear the Brunt"]

[Text] Bombay, November 7—Four months after "Gumboro disease" ravaged India's poultry industry, killing over 13 million chickens and forcing shut an estimated 40 per cent poultry farms nationwide, the epidemic is beginning to hit consumers in the pocket.

Though the disease has now been wrestled into submission by a new vaccine, it has decimated breeding and laying stock in several production centres, resulting in losses of around Rs 50 crores and widespread panic in the poultry industry.

The epidemic has left in its wake a severe shortage of eggs and chicken that has sent prices soaring; industry observers reckon that it will be at least eight months before the situation returns to normal.

Isolated instances of infectious bursal disease (popularly called Gumboro disease, because it was first detected in a town of the name in Delaware, U.S.) were first noticed at the beginning of the year in farms in the east. Though farmers routinely vaccinate their birds against this disease, the outbreak proved resistant to available medication.

"We found that our birds were dying in very large numbers, even though we had vaccinated them," said Mr M.P. Merchant. He is among the more cautious, since the first outbreak ever recorded in India occurred in 1978, on his Vasai farm.

Veterinarians soon realised that they were battling a new strain of the birnaviridae virus. "The disease is like AIDS," said Dr Sangeeta Dasgupta, a consulting immunologist at a Nashik-based farm. "It attacks the bird's bursa, the organ which gives immunity against infection."

Thus, the birds are as likely to die from other poultry killers as Raniketh disease as from Gumboro disease itself. She hastened to add the Gumboro disease was not communicable to humans. "No poultry disease, besides salmonellosis, can affect human beings," she said.

While the old strain of the virus usually killed between 8 per cent and 12 per cent of flocks, the 1993 variety led to a mortality rate of between 75 per cent and 90 per cent.

"Only later we realised that we were dealing with a more dangerous form of the virus," explained Dr V.S. Narasapur of the Bombay Veterinary College. The new strain was identified as VVIB (very virulent infectious bursal disease) which caused great damage to Europe's poultry stock last year.

As scientists struggled to cope with the threat, the mutated virus travelled aboard trucks carrying eggs, chicken and feed, wreaking havoc in every poultry pocket in the country when the epidemic peaked in August and September.

Losses were most extensive in the three southern states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, which accounted for around 9 million of the 13 million poultry deaths reported nationwide.

Speaking to this newspaper from his farm in Hyderabad, India's largest supplier of parent birds, Mr Sheikh Imam, said: "At least 5 million chickens have died in this area." Experts estimate that the 100-km area around Hyderabad city had a poultry population of around 14 million before the disease flared up.

The Namakal area of Tamil Nadu's Salem district was also badly hit, losing 3.5 million of its 9 million birds.

In Maharashtra, the first signs of Gumboro were detected in Yavatmal, in February. "The virus spread to Ahmednagar and, in no time at all, we found that it was all over the state," said Mr G.R. Naik, the deputy director of poultry in the directorate of animal husbandry.

He estimated that at least 2.5 million birds had fallen prey to Gumboro disease in the state, losses being especially heavy in Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur districts.

After several weeks of heavy losses, a team from the livestock health surveillance division of the department of animal husbandry and dairying in New Delhi extensively toured the affected areas.

"We found that overcrowding and improper disposal of carcasses was contributing to the high mortality rate," said Dr Lal Krishan, one of the members. In its report, the Central team recommended that sanitary measures on hatcheries be improved, the hatcheries be properly registered, that a proper vaccination schedule be followed, and that the quality of the vaccines be checked.

The virus was finally reined in by October, after a new pattern of vaccination was introduced. "We now recommend that our farmers vaccinate the birds three times, at

the age of eight or nine days, with simultaneous doses of 'live' and 'killed' vaccines; then a fortnight later with 'killed' vaccine again," said Dr P.G. Chowdhury, technical director of a Pune-based Venkateshwara Hatcheries, the largest producer and supplier of vaccines in the country.

He said that his company had to develop a new form of vaccine, incorporating the virulent strain of the virus.

IRAN

Health Official Comments on AIDS Statistics

LD2811120193 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 28 Nov 93

[Summary] The deputy for health affairs at the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education, Dr. Malek-Afzali, in a news conference on the threshold of World AIDS Day, spoke about the instances of the disease in Iran.

According to the deputy health minister, the first instance of AIDS observed in Iran was in 1366 [year beginning 21 March 1987] in a one-year-old child. This resulted from imported blood products, he said. He announced that all blood received from donors by the Blood Transfusion Organization is being examined meticulously and no blood is being imported. Imported blood products are also being carefully tested, so there is no likelihood in Iran of AIDS being transmitted through blood. The number of AIDS victims that has been identified in Iran so far is 270, and of those, 62 have died.

Health Official on Increase in Sex-Related AIDS Cases

NC2811141293 Paris AFP in English 1348 GMT 28 Nov 93

[Text] Tehran, Nov 28 (AFP)—Blood transfusions are no longer the main source of AIDS in Iran and most HIV-positive patients caught the virus through sexual intercourse, a senior health official said Sunday [28 November].

Deputy Health Minister Hoseyn Malek Afzali said 60 percent of the people who caught AIDS in 1992 were exposed to the virus through sexual intercourse.

He said 269 people were known to have caught the disease in Iran, of whom 62 people had died and 85 had developed full-blown AIDS.

However, the number of Iranians infected with the virus could be as high as 5,000 nationwide, Afzali said.

Although the subject of sex is considered taboo in Iran the government has stepped up a campaign to prevent the spread of the disease.

The authorities launched an AIDS awareness campaign two years ago and the use of condoms is allowed, although sex before marriage is forbidden.

Health Official Says 269 People Found HIV Positive

*LD0112234393 Tehran IRNA in English 1917 GMT
1 Dec 93*

[Text] Yazd, Dec. 1, IRNA—Two haemophiliacs infected with AIDS have been identified in this central province, director of the local health department, Dr. 'Ali-Asghar Farshad announced here today.

Speaking to a one-day seminar on AIDS campaign, he said that one of the two succumbed to the disease at the age of 12, while the other a 10-year-old child, has been hospitalized in Tehran.

He put the number of HIV positive patients in Iran at 269, one of the lowest in the world, and said most of them were infected with the disease through blood products and contaminated syringes.

Farshad quoting statistics said nearly 300,000 AIDS patients have so far died, and 3 million more are predicted to lose their lives by the next two years.

The first AIDS patient in the world was identified in 1981, however, an estimated 14 million AIDS carriers exist in the world now.

Opposition Paper Cited on Hospital Privatization, Kidney Thefts

*NC1512112393 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian
Kordestan in Persian 1730 GMT 14 Dec 93*

[Report published in the 49th edition of ETTEHAD-E KAR—Labor Union—the organ of the Feda'i-ye Iran Organization, Sazman-e Fada'i-ye Iran; date of publication and place of issue not given]

[Excerpt] In relation with the government's new policy on privatizing industry, many of the country's industries—both heavy and light—have been put up for sale or have been sold. [passage omitted]

The Khomeyni Hospital in Tabriz, which is affiliated with the Tabriz University, was reportedly bought for 650 million tumans and privatized by several bazaar merchants. The public sector is operating only a small part of the hospital at a very low cost. It is said that there are no specialists or doctors in this public sector, which is being run by interns, and that when a patient in the private ward complains about costs, he is sent to the public ward, where prices are low.

[passage omitted]

Recently, the sale of kidneys in Iran and in the provinces has increased. In relation with this, children are sometimes kidnapped and their kidneys removed and sold. In some cases, children have been killed and in others, a child is kidnapped for a week and released after one of his kidneys has been removed. This has resulted in great insecurity for children, particularly in Tehran, where parents must take their children to and from school.

ISRAEL

Knesset Publicizes AIDS Figures on International AIDS Day

*TA2511103593 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew
25 Nov 93 p 11*

[Report by Hila Tov]

[Excerpt] Some 50 percent of Israelis who contract AIDS belong to the 15-24 age group; 1,084 AIDS carriers are registered in Israel, but it is assessed that their real number is anywhere between 2,000 to 2,500. The number of those suffering from the disease is 255. So far 188 have died from AIDS.

These figures were revealed yesterday during the Knesset's Education and Culture Committee session, marking International AIDS Day. Israel is defined by the WHO as a low risk country. Switzerland, Spain, and Italy lead Europe in AIDS frequency. [passage omitted]

JORDAN

Health Minister Gives Statistics on AIDS Cases in Country

*JN0112124793 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
1 Dec 93 p 32*

[By Ayman 'Abd-al-Hafiz]

[Text] Health Minister Dr. 'Abd al-Rahim Malhas has said that in Jordan 23 people, mostly foreigners, have died as a result of AIDS since 1986.

In a statement to AL-DUSTUR, he said that those who contracted the disease in Jordan during the past stage are only 94, of which 62 are Jordanian citizens. Out of the 62 cases, 40 contracted the disease outside Jordan because they suffer from hemophilia, which requires regular blood transfusions.

He said that the remainder contracted the disease in Jordan during the same period.

PAKISTAN

Editorial Warns Against Advance of AIDS

BK0512101493 Islamabad *THE MUSLIM* in English
5 Dec 93 p 6

[Editorial: "AIDS is Coming, Fast"]

[Text] The estimates vary. The causes are hotly debated. But one thing is very clear—Asia is likely to take front seat in the plunge towards an epidemic of AIDS by the turn of the century. What is even more chilling to realise is that Pakistan is sleeping as disaster approaches.

According to the Asian Development Bank, only one of several institutions to have predicted a grim future in this regard, the number of AIDS cases in Asia is expected to surpass those in Africa in the next couple of years. By the year 2000, Asia will be home to more than half of the people of this world who are infected with HIV, the virus that inevitably leads to AIDS. These estimates are based on the current rate of growth of the incidence of infections in this part of the world, and the attitudes that prevail in countries towards the disease. For the most part, governments' reaction in Asia range from complete apathy and ignorance to hostility towards the disease and its victims. This is further based on the perception that AIDS is limited to certain groups of people, those that Asian societies keep at arms length. Some individuals believe that AIDS is God's way of dealing with such people, and some think that it is God's wrath descending on western immorality.

Pakistan for one is reacting very slowly to the AIDS crisis, its authorities and society perhaps believing that the borders of the country will keep out the full scale assault that is currently underway in neighbouring countries. India is estimated to have about one million HIV infected people today, though given the fact that most of these people are unaware of the time bomb within them, they are probably spreading the disease more rapidly than can be calculated with any certainty. Suffice to say that the situation is very serious. Belatedly, Indian authorities are waking up to the realities, and AIDS awareness campaigns are being pursued with some sense of urgency. The biggest hurdle in the way is ignorance, which makes information dissemination difficult in a society where taboos don't allow candid exposure to such issues. Not surprisingly, the problem is even greater for Pakistan. Though we have only a few hundred reported

cases, they are growing rapidly, and most HIV infections are unreported or unknown even to the infected people.

Much of the world is observing AIDS week currently, to focus attention on the issue and spread awareness of the danger. In most of Asia the awareness effort has been limited almost exclusively to the more affluent and more liberal segments of society, with walks and high level seminars putting in their usual token show. The most vulnerable sections of the populace, the proverbial masses, as always remain untouched by such publicity stunts. Ironically, they will be the first to be touched, indeed knocked down, by the virus.

It is not simply a matter of physical health that confronts us here. For developing countries like Pakistan, it would be devastating to be burdened by the heavy costs, both human and financial, that would follow a full scale spread of the disease. AIDS right now is spreading among all creeds, classes and ages, and both sexes, simply because those who carry the virus don't know that they do, and those who catch it from them are unaware of the precautions that they must take for their own safety. In its wake, AIDS is leaving a devastating trail of human suffering, and it is only the fault of ignorance. Unless Pakistan acts now to curb the impending assault, the costs later on will put out of our reach not only physical health, but also any economic prosperity that may be appearing on the horizon today.

Our health authorities have so far failed to make any impact in spreading AIDS awareness to where it is needed most. It is frightening to know that almost all donated blood in the country is unscreened for the HIV virus, which means that hospitalised patients all over the country who may need blood transfusions are at risk of contracting the virus. This indicates the gross apathy of the concerned authorities towards the health of the people. No doubt, the individuals assigned to the task are fully aware themselves, and genuinely concerned about the immediate threat, but they have so far failed to initiate even those safeguards that would minimise the risks for unsuspecting patients. Why?

We need an action plan, something perhaps on the line of National Conservation Strategy and the environmental mass awareness programme, to impart education about AIDS. Perhaps it can be combined with family planning, since that too is dealing with some generally taboo subjects. What is important to understand is that our illiterate masses are not going to be able to read about the disease, they must be told about it. It will take a major grass roots and multi-media effort, and it can't wait.

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Malaria Outbreak on Military Base

93WE0520A Moscow ROSSIYA in Russian No 10,
5-11 May 93 p 3

[Article by Yuriy Kozlov, IF: "Epidemic at a Military Base"]

[Text] A sailor died as a result of an outbreak of tropical malaria at the Materiel and Technical Support Base of the Pacific Fleet (TOF) of the Russian Federation in Cam-Ranh (Vietnam). There were seven recorded cases of this fever among military personnel of this base. Another two sailors with a severe form of the disease were brought to the main TOF hospital in Vladivostok.

As reported by G. Shchekin, acting chief of the TOF medical service in Cam-Ranh, a system of preventive measures is presently being organized to prevent spread of the epidemic. Arrival in Cam-Ranh of the chief epidemiologist of the Russian Navy and specialists in tropical diseases is expected in the very near future.

RUSSIA

Influenza Declines, Other Diseases on Increase

PM0612094393 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA
PRAVDA in Russian 3 Dec 93 p 1

[Valeriy Ivanov report: "Influenza Passed By"]

[Text] Only one case of influenza was registered last week in Moscow, while the week before there were several cases, Nikolay Malyshev, Moscow's chief infection specialist, told INTERFAX. From what he said, the overall level of cases of influenza does not exceed the normal level. The number of cases is not increasing, but decreasing. According to N. Malyshev's prediction, in the near future you can scarcely expect a big surge in the number of cases of influenza. By way of preventive measures, he recommended that the inhabitants of the capital should toughen themselves up, take fresh air, plenty of fluids, lemon, and honey, and by way of medicines—Dibasol.

At the same time, according to Moscow's main infection specialist, "I find diphtheria a far greater headache." N. Malyshev reported that between the beginning of this year and 25 November 2,001 patients with diphtheria have been registered in Moscow, including 458 children. In the same period of time, 86 people have died of diphtheria.

A total of 316 new people suffering from diphtheria have been registered in November alone, including 188 children. The number of people with diphtheria has trebled in comparison with the same period last year. Fatalities from this disease are increasing even more. "The only effective preventive measure is vaccination," N. Malyshev stressed.

According to figures from the Russian Federation State Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Supervision, the level of intestinal diseases has risen again since June 1993 following a number of very favorable years in Russia. In 1992, for instance, the lowest level of cases of dysentery was recorded in the whole period of the official registration of this disease (since 1970).

However, in the first eight months of this year, the number of people suffering from dysentery has risen in the Russian Federation in comparison with the same period last year by 21.2 percent. The greatest increase was in the northern and northwestern regions. In all, during the eight months, information about 30 outbreaks has come to the attention of the Russian State Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Supervision.

Cases of cholera have also been registered. In July-August, 11 Russian citizens who returned from India, Pakistan, and Turkey were diagnosed as having cholera. Two cases have been identified in Dagestan and Stavropol Kray.

Maritime Kray Threatened by Tuberculosis Epidemic

LD0512104693 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service
in Russian 0420 GMT 5 Dec 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Tatyana Pozhidayeva]

[Text] Vladivostok, 5 Dec—The number of Tuberculosis [TB] cases in the central city of Maritime Kray is growing at a threatening pace. Compared with last year, the number of victims of this dangerous disease has increased by more than 40 percent.

If in the past TB was thought to be a disease of the poor, now the TB lists have representatives of all sections of society. The city's medical workers have been particularly alarmed by a high number of cases at Vladivostok's higher educational establishments. According to the medical workers at the city TB clinic, alongside students' traditional untidiness and their unwillingness to undergo regular checks, low living standards and overcrowding in hostels are aggravating the situation.

Foreigners who have literally flooded Vladivostok have become a special risk group. Thousands of citizens of Korea, Vietnam, and especially China who arrive here for seasonal work do not have preliminary medical checks. And the city's markets, overcrowded by them, have turned into places of scandalous anti-sanitation.

St. Petersburg Has Highest Rate of Diphtheria

PM1512145593 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian
15 Dec 93 p 8

[Besik Pipiya report: "Diphtheria in St. Petersburg"]

[Text] It seemed that Russia's doctors had eradicated this deadly infection once and for all back in the seventies. But diphtheria has now resurfaced and dragged

democratic Russia back to the early fifties. St. Petersburg has surpassed Kaliningrad and Moscow to take the lead in the number of people infected with disease, a fact which is a cause of shame as we approach the end of the century.

The number of diphtheria victims is tripling annually as is the number of deaths. How can this uninvited guest be removed? Mayor Sobchak's instructions—demands along the lines of protect, register, and inoculate—have proved ineffective to date. The main reasons are the population's low level of information about the imminent danger and about the need for compulsory inoculation, as well as the shortage of vaccine.

Local Health Department Reports Epidemic of Diphtheria

WS0312120693 Kaliningrad KALININGRADSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 18 Nov 93 p 1

[Appeal by the Health Care Department of the Kaliningrad City Administration: "Diphtheria Is Taking Lives"]

[Excerpts] Dear fellow-citizens! The Health Care Department is appealing to you in view of the emergency situation that has developed in our city due to cases of diphtheria among adults and children and an outbreak of an epidemic. [passage omitted]

Over the first 10 months of this year, 110 adults and children were taken sick with diphtheria, and 237 were registered as carriers of toxigenic viruses of the diphtheria pathogen. Serious cases of this disease were reported among 27 patients, four of whom died—three adults under 50 years of age and a child of two years.

Among all sick persons, 58 patients had not been vaccinated against diphtheria, including all the death cases. [passage omitted]

The State Hygiene Center for Epidemic Prevention has adopted a resolution on the obligatory immunization of all city inhabitants. Most of the people have already been vaccinated. However, about 100,000 persons have not yet been immunized, and they are boosting the spread of diphtheria in the city. [passage omitted]

[Signed] V. Gadasyuk, chief of the Health Care Department at the Kaliningrad City Administration.

Widespread Diphtheria Epidemic Reported in Sakhalin

LD2312071293 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 0613 GMT 23 Dec 93

[By ITAR-TASS correspondent Yevgeniy Belovitskiy]

[Text] Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, 23 Dec—Practically the whole of Sakhalin is in the grips of diphtheria. The disease has been observed in the absolute majority of rayons on the largest island in Russia. Fifty-eight people

have been admitted to the hospital to date. The first fatalities were in the port of Kholmok, where two people have died.

In the opinion of doctors, the source of the infection was from newly arrived conscripts or convicts in prison camps on the island.

The situation is complicated by the absence of vaccine for inoculations and medicine for those who are already ill. An ITAR-TASS correspondent was told by the head of the oblast public health department Aleksandr Moshenskiy that the last reserves of vaccine for inoculations are to be used exclusively on children.

Moscow Introduces 'Mandatory Immunization' Measures

PM2312140193 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 23 Dec 93 p 1

[Unattributed report under the "News in Brief" rubric: "Universal Immunization Announced"]

[Text] Mandatory immunization against diphtheria and whooping cough is beginning in Moscow. There have been 2,201 cases of diphtheria recorded in Moscow since the beginning of the year (according to the figures as of 10 December). This includes 478 children. Some 91 people have died of this disease, nine children among them. Teams of medical personnel will perform the vaccinations right in the workplace.

Health Official Discusses Concerns, Plan of Action

WS1012111193 Kaliningrad KALININGRADSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 2 Dec 93 p 3

[Interview with Nikolay Zagorskiy, chief of the Kaliningrad Oblast Epidemiology Service, by Zh. Azarova; place and date not given: "The Whys and Wherefores"—first paragraph is KALININGRADSKAYA PRAVDA introduction published in boldface]

[Text] The Kaliningrad Oblast Administration has adopted a comprehensive regional program for epidemiological protection of the oblast population in 1993-1996.

We have asked N. Zagorskiy, chief of the oblast epidemiology service, to comment on this issue.

Zagorskiy: It is hard to overstate the significance of this program. Everything it envisions is connected with concrete problems crucial to the health of the people. Unfortunately, the number of these problems is growing. This is the reason behind the concern of the epidemiology service and its goal-directed resolutions for overcoming an array of alarming situations. Some of these situations require immediate acting, some do not, however, all of them are equally important. By the way, the

program prepared by our specialists falls in line with the program for socioeconomic development of our oblast in many aspects.

Azarova: Could you outline the most important aspects of the program?

Zagorskiy: There are no unimportant aspects of epidemiological protection of the people. For example, water supplies and the quality of water. Everyone knows that the quality is very poor. It is enough to see the inside our kettles covered with scale. It is necessary to boil water before drinking. Additionally, there are norms for drinking water specified by the State Standardization Office. Our water does not comply with these norms, particularly in the cities of Neman, Bagratinsk, Pravdinsk, Ozersk, and Baltiysk. The situation in rural areas is even worse in some cases. Contamination of the water system is very dangerous. The September events in the village of Petrovo, Gurev Rayon, where 17 people were infected with viral hepatitis, may serve as an example. Also alarming is the situation in recreational areas polluted with sludge, waste, and sediment. Construction of new water treatment facilities have been postponed almost everywhere. The program provides, among other measures, for the completion of these projects.

Azarova: One can have the impression that there is one big dumping ground around: You go to enjoy nature, but instead you see garbage everywhere. The same situation exists in cities and villages. One can feel disaster in the air.

Zagorskiy: One such disaster is already under way. It is no secret that there is no facility for reprocessing solid wastes. There are only dumping grounds that spread disease and breed rats. Sometimes, dumping grounds self-ignite, such as the one in the village of Kosmodemyanskiy. Additionally, we should build a facility for utilizing toxic industrial waste currently dumped in forests, open fields, and water intakes. The Yantar factory was requested to conduct construction of such a facility. The program also provides for similar projects in various cities and rayons.

Azarova: Recently, the issue of protection against electromagnetic radiation has appeared...

Zagorskiy: We addressed this issue long ago, however... Currently, our specialists have managed to convince appropriate authorities that this is a very acute problem. For example, according to the program, the construction of the Kaliningrad television tower is to be moved outside the city limits in 1995. The issue of resettling people who live in zones with increased electromagnetic radiation is currently being examined. Permanent radiation control is being introduced at all border checkpoints of the Kaliningrad Regional Customs Office.

Azarova: Nikolay Nikolayevich, what does the new program provide for protection against contagious diseases?

According to your statistics, the epidemiological situation has deteriorated due to an array of diseases that, we thought, had disappeared forever...

Zagorskiy: The reappearance of those diseases is connected with many reasons: migration of people, appearance of street markets, socioeconomic hardships, exacerbation of hygiene... Each of these reasons has generated its own consequences. Nowadays, we can observe increasing cases of pneumonia and sexually transmitted diseases, including syphilis and viral hepatitis. The lack of appropriate hygiene has caused the spread of mycosis and itch. Regarding the latter, it would be expedient to return to the methods applied in the 1930's, and to reintroduce special medical subunits for treatment of this disease. Diphtheria has also been a big surprise to us. We are trying really hard: We vaccinate the people, even in their homes, however, there are still many who have not been vaccinated.

The program provides for a complex of measures such as construction of a contagious diseases hospital in Kaliningrad, opening of a convalescent spa for those infected with pneumonia, or allocating special places for burying infected cattle. Nonetheless, the most important thing is to encourage the use of prophylactics among the people. Everybody must change his or her attitude today, and realize that they are the only ones responsible for their health. We will introduce obligatory health insurance and a massive vaccination campaign. The media could be very helpful in propagating our initiatives. The most important thing is that we are all healthy to work for ourselves and Russia's prosperity.

Surge in Rodent-Borne Diseases

93WE0531A Yekaterinburg URALSKIY RABOCHIY
in Russian 13 Jul 93 p 1

[Article by Ye. Vladikin; "Alarm! There's the Smell of Plague in the Air"; first paragraph is URALSKIY RABOCHIY introduction]

[Text] A dramatic rise in the number of rodent-borne diseases has been noted in the oblast.

According to data of the Oblast Sanitary and Epidemiological Oversight Center, 148 cases of pseudotuberculosis (including 4 outbreaks in children's preschool institutions) and 56 cases of intestinal yersiniosis in the first 6 months of this year. Let us note, for the sake of comparison, that 8 and 15 cases of these diseases, respectively, had been reported for the same period last year. Fresh vegetables that stored for some time at rat-infested warehouses of trade bases and stores are increasingly often the source of infection.

As we know, rodents are also involved in the spread of tick-borne encephalitis. Fortunately, there is still no tularemia, God forbid, or plague, yet these most dangerous diseases are also transmitted by rats and mice.

Wherein lies the cause of the unprecedented surge in morbidity? Specialists believe that it is not a matter of natural growth of the rodent population (in this sense, the situation is quite usual this year), it is simply that people have virtually stopped controlling this long-tailed filth.

Deratization, i.e., extermination of rodents, has been always the concern of disinfection and prevention stations and departments, which are paid for their work on a contractual basis. At present, many enterprises have more important things to think about than rats, and for this reason all the necessary conditions for reproduction and improved diet are provided for these animals. And the disinfection and prevention service is falling apart before our eyes, people are quitting because of the low wages, there are not enough modern poisons, transportation, needed materials and bait.

Payment for rodent extermination work from the local budget is the logical solution for this situation. After all, the Moscow city council adopted a decision that provides for comprehensive, regularly scheduled deratization (rats must be exterminated everywhere, in the residential sector, developed areas, and who is to pay the expense?). The authorities in the capital have allocated considerable budgetary funds, and have made it incumbent on all enterprises, regardless of forms of ownership, to conclude contracts with disinfection-prevention stations; they have implemented a number of measures to furnish this service with everything it needs, as well as for technical-engineering protection against rodents.

Moscow was the first to come to its senses. But the people of the Urals are maintaining an aloof calmness: they are not worried, so be it....

Abandoned Chlorine Endangers Town; Gas Masks Issued

PM0912135793 Moscow ROSSIYSKIYE VESTI in Russian 8 Dec 93 p 1

[Unattributed report under the "Extraordinary Incidents" rubric: "So You Want To Breathe Chlorine?"]

[Text] Inhabitants of the settlement at the pulp and paper plant near Turinsk in Sverdlovsk Oblast are threatened with chemical poisoning. Owing to the stoppage of production, two unclaimed 50-tonne tank cars filled with chlorine have been standing for about a month on the branch line leading to the plant. Although the tank cars are being kept under guard, a tragedy could occur at any moment. Another 50 tonnes of chlorine have been poured into a container on the plant site. Owing to the critical situation, all the inhabitants of the settlement have been issued with gas masks.

Bad Water Threatens Volga Basin Dwellers' Health

PM0912144193 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 8 Dec 93 First Edition p 2

[INTERFAX report: "Nearly Everyone in the Volga Area Is Forced To Drink Contaminated Water"]

[Text] Some 61 million people living in the Volga River basin in Russia are forced to use highly contaminated drinking water, which is making increased chlorination necessary, thus damaging the health of the population.

This was stated at a joint session of the Russian Ecology and Natural Resources Ministry collegium and republic State Sanitation and Epidemiology Inspectorate. According to the collegium's data, no territory in the Volga area has health and hygiene and microbiological standards for the quality of drinking water. The ecological situation has become most unsatisfactory in the Cherepovtsy, Nizhniy Novgorod, Samara, Saratov, Volgograd, and Astrakhan industrial centers, where there is a high level of pollution due to petroleum products, phenols, and other compounds.

Kaliningrad: Increased Sickness Due To Water Pollution

PM1111155393 Moscow Ostankino Television First Channel Network in Russian 1800 GMT 8 Nov 93

[From the "Novosti" newscast: Video report by N. Prokofyeva, S. Chekalin, V. Belousov, identified by caption]

[Text] [Prokofyeva over shot of garbage dump] It is a golden fall in the Baltic region—the smell of the sea and autumn leaves. Except for here, that is. This is the infamous garbage dump near Kaliningrad. My colleague Stanislav Chekalin reported on it back in the days of perestroika. And that old footage in no way differs from today's. In recent times an increase in intestinal illnesses has been noted in Kaliningrad. Local experts and experts brought in from Moscow believe that the garbage dump is largely responsible for this.

[Unnamed interviewee] The water from the Pregel river is the reason for the outbreak of illnesses. Untreated effluent not only from this garbage dump but also from the entire municipal sewage network, and most importantly of all particles from pulp and paper plants, are discarded into the river.

[T. Grunicheva, Kaliningrad's chief hygienist, identified by caption] Documentation was sent to the prosecutor's office. A lot of documentation, whole volumes of it. But all we got was a terse reply—just a few lines—telling us that given the absence of a corpus delicti the matter was being returned to us.

[V. Cheburayev, representative from Russia's State Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Supervision, identified by caption] There is no material evidence of a crime. What they mean is that our laws do not work. Our most fundamental principle is the principle that the polluter should be made to pay—but it doesn't work anywhere.

[Chekalin] It's true. The laws do not work, and nor do the purification facilities, whose construction began back in the socialist era a quarter of a century ago under the requirements of the International Convention of the Baltic Countries. Hundreds of millions of rubles went to waste in every sense of the word—the construction projects were never finished. The Committee for Sanitary and Epidemiological Supervision and the municipal administration have worked out and approved a program to protect Kaliningrad's population against epidemics. [Video shows garbage dump, surrounding area, inoperational purification facilities]

Finnish Firm Renovating Moscow Hospital

94P20145A Helsinki HUFVUDSTADSBLADET
in Swedish 25 Nov 93 p 13

[Finnish News Agency Report: "Puolimatka Renovating Hospital in Moscow"]

[Text] The construction firm A. Puolimatka is renovating a hospital for burn victims in central Moscow. The project is valued at around 50 million [Finnish] markkas. The project is to be commenced before the end of the year, since Puolimatka has already received the advance payment that was a requirement before work could start.

The hospital renovation will provide jobs for around 10 Finns and about 150 local workers. Makers of construction materials and other subcontractors will also benefit.

The [Russian] joint partner and supplier of hospital technical equipment is Medko Medical Ltd. An operating room and 62 bed places, of which 10 are to be reserved for intensive-care patients, will be renovated in the hospital.

BELARUS

Number of HIV Carriers in Minsk Estimated at 900 to 1,200

WS0712085293 Minsk VECHERNIY MINSK
in Russian 30 Nov 93 p 1

[Unattributed report: "In the Mirror of Statistics"]

[Text] Belarus has recorded 98 cases of the HIV infection, with 69 of them in Minsk. Each fourth case is the so-called stage of the clinical AIDS development. Six patients have already died (five died of AIDS, while in one patient the HIV infection was an accompanying sickness). Three victims were from Minsk. The key mode

of transferring HIV infection is sexual. The largest part of the virus carriers is between 20 and 40 years of age. The actual number of people infected with HIV in Minsk is estimated at 900-1,200.

We obtained this information from Valentin Bykovoy, epidemiologist of the Belarusian AIDS Prevention Center.

'Dramatic Increase' of Thyroid Cancer in Children Since Chernobyl Lamented

WS0612111393 Minsk Radio Minsk Network
in Belarusian 0400 GMT 6 Dec 93

[Report by Ivan Hladkiy]

[Excerpts] The dire socioeconomic situation in which Belarus has fallen of late—constant price hikes, falling production, the specter of mass unemployment—are threatening our very well-being. I am convinced that we will overcome the economic carnage, but it will be more difficult to overcome the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident.

I have invited Natalia Masherova, chairman of Public Fund for Chernobyl Issues, to comment on this problem.

[Begin Masherova recording, in Russian] [passage omitted] Belarusian children are the ones who have suffered most from the Chernobyl catastrophe. I am addressing the Belarusian legislature: It is easier to convince the international community than our state financial structures that we are going through a critical period. In Belarus, we have witnessed a dramatic increase in (?aggressive) thyroid cancer among children. Currently, Ukraine and Russia are lagging behind in these statistics. These statistics demonstrate that currently 0.1 percent out of one million children suffer from thyroid cancer. In Belarus, in Gomel Oblast in particular, this figure is 13 percent. Why do we keep silent about these tragic figures? In my opinion, all the work of our legislature and the government should stem from the addressing of Chernobyl issues. [end recording]

ESTONIA

More than 2.3 Million Kronas Spent on AIDS Treatment

LD2812214393 Moscow BALTFAX in English
1949 GMT 28 Dec 93

[Text] More than 2.3 Mn kronas (about \$170,000) have been spent for the struggle with AIDS in Estonia over the last year. This was announced to BALTFAX by a physician of the Tallinn Merimetsa Hospital's AIDS Center, Jaan Martin.

As many as 29 AIDS victims currently live in Estonia. As many as three of the infected left Estonia and two AIDS victims died. A total of 5 more AIDS victims were discovered this year. The first AIDS victim was discovered in Estonia in 1987.

GEORGIA

Senior Doctor Calls for 'Radical' Measures To Combat AIDS*AU1412163093 Tbilisi NOVAYA GAZETA in Russian
No 35, Nov 93 p 3*

[Ketino Kakhiani article: "AIDS in Georgia: The Forecasts Are Not Encouraging"]

[Text] It has been declared that 1 December will be World AIDS Day. However sad it may be, Georgia has compiled its own statistics for this day: Sixteen persons infected with the virus, 11 of whom are citizens of the republic.

This figure is, as yet, not high, a fact that was made public at the recent European regional convention of persons coordinating the AIDS problem that was held under the aegis of the World Health Organization in Berne, Switzerland. During the work of the conference, doctors came to the conclusion that the main obstacle to the spread of AIDS in our republic (and, incidentally, this is characteristic of almost all the republics of the former Soviet Union) was the highly effective work of the epidemic surveillance service; it has not been possible to achieve this in the United States or in other foreign countries where the number of AIDS cases is huge. The compulsory screening of persons infected with the virus and those who have been in contact with them is viewed as a violation of human rights in these countries and, consequently, in the struggle against the disease, emphasis is given in the main to large-scale anti-AIDS propaganda.

"In our country, the screening and control of those carrying the virus are also not compulsory," said Tengiz Tsertsvadze, senior doctor at the Republican AIDS and Immunodeficiency Center, who represented Georgia at the conference in Berne. "While their number is still not high, we manage to maintain close contact with them and convince them of the expediency of undergoing individual screening, though on a voluntary basis."

"In general, we consider the present practice abroad to be too liberal and feel that it could do more harm than good. In spite of the extremely unfavorable working conditions, we are, at the moment, succeeding in preventing the occurrence of new cases and in maintaining the epidemic at a comparatively low level."

"Nevertheless, all this does not mean that we should be complacent and do nothing more. The forecast given by experts is very alarming: Unless radical measures are taken immediately in the struggle against AIDS in Georgia, the number of cases will reach 20,000 by 2000 and several hundred thousand by 2010."

"There are two principal factors that will contribute to the spread of the disease in this country: Drug addiction, which is already acquiring terrifying proportions, and the

dire shortage of disposable syringes and other medical instruments and the means to sterilize them."

"Speaking of radical measures, I mean by this, first and foremost, the creation of a material and technical base and necessary conditions for normalizing the work of anti-AIDS services, in particular our center, which is, at the moment, the only one in Georgia that is concerned with this problem. It is essential that we have here, in the center, all those specialists who can take care of precisely those persons who have the AIDS virus."

"If, in 1990, we were able to screen 400,000 persons, this year, we have managed to screen only 105,000 on account of the fact that there has been no money to purchase test kits. We hardly have enough even for blood donors. Correspondingly, it is probable that the figure for the number of persons infected with the AIDS virus is inaccurate and there are more than those who have been registered."

"We should copy the experience of the West regarding large-scale anti-AIDS propaganda and public health education among the population. Those powerful [publicity] campaigns, which are conducted there in all the mass media and which are supported by sponsors, charitable organizations, and public figures, including those carrying the AIDS virus, are shaping social awareness and thereby creating a big barrier to the spread of the disease."

"We hope that our mass media will help us, particularly television. Meanwhile, in this respect, the one thing that we have been able to create ourselves in our center is a department for preventive measures against AIDS that will be in contact with the mass media."

LITHUANIA

AIDS Center Reports 19 Identified Virus Carriers*WS1612115693 Vilnius TIESA in Lithuanian 3 Dec 93
No 235 p 2*

[Report by Zilvinas Pekarskas: "No Kidding With Blood"]

[Excerpts] On Wednesday [2 December], the Lithuanian AIDS Center held a press conference devoted to the AIDS World Day—1 December. A man infected with the AIDS virus appeared before the public for the first time in Lithuania. [passage omitted]

AIDS Center Director S. Caplinskas said that the slogan of this year's AIDS World Day—"Time for Action" is slightly ironic, because the world learned about the epidemic 10 years ago. Nevertheless, the director urged the nation to rally its forces at least now in order to change its behavior.

L. Stribinskiene, chief of the AIDS Center laboratory, familiarized the audience with the recent story of AIDS-infected donor blood in Germany. [passage omitted]

By the way, Lithuania began to test the blood of its donors with perfect "Abbott" systems only a year ago. TIESA's readers may remember the scandal when the virus of jaundice (fortunately, not the AIDS virus) was found in the blood of almost all donors in Vilnius.

According to S. Caplinskas, the blood of Lithuanian donors is now being tested with the most reliable systems.

S. Caplinskas presented the following statistics: Of 19 AIDS carriers identified in Lithuania, one is a woman, 14 are men who have had homosexual contacts, and 10 persons have families with 13 children. The wife of one infected man is expecting a child. No member of the carriers' families have caught the AIDS virus. The age of the patients ranges from 19 to 40 years. There are only two persons with unfinished higher education, six of the patients are serious businessmen, and one is a representative of bohemian circles.

HIV-Positive Incidence Has Increased to 20 Persons

WS2012124293 Tallinn BNS in English 1628 GMT
17 Dec 93

[Text] Vilnius, Dec 17, BNS - The reported incidence of the AIDS virus has increased to 20 in Lithuania, the national AIDS Center said.

A blood sample from a hospital in the seaport of Klaipeda has tested HIV-positive. The center said the infected person is male, but there is no information about his sexual orientation and occupation.

The center also reported that one of the AIDS-infected people registered in Lithuania recently died abroad and one more AIDS carrier was killed at a hospital in 1988 by a mentally disturbed patient.

MOLDOVA

Physicians' Trade Union Threatens Labor Action

AU2311174393 Chisinau BASAPRESS in English
2015 GMT 23 Nov 93

[Text] Chisinau BASAPRESS, 23/11/1993—Tomorrow, the Moldovan Medical Trade Union will send President Mircea Snegur an appeal. It includes a series of demands regarding the medical assistance and social protection of doctors, stated to BASA Victor Benu, leader of this trade union. "There is no medicine and medical equipment in

the hospitals, 50 percent of the sanitary equipment does not function, and only 40 percent of means for health protection were allocated in the October-December period," states the appeal. The trade union demands an increase of wages by 15 percent. "The medical trade union will wait a month for the president's answer, then, if it is negative, the trade union will start protest measures," stated Benu.

UKRAINE

More Than 100 HIV Cases Reported in Odessa Oblast

AU2112135293 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian
18 Dec 93 p 4

[Heorhiy Vorotnyuk report from Odessa: "They Brought... AIDS From Abroad"]

[Text] In Odessa Oblast, which, unfortunately, continues to be Ukraine's leading region regarding the number of persons infected with the HIV virus (more than 100 persons, or more than one-half of the total number of cases in the country), another three carriers of the deadly disease have been revealed. They are young sailors from a fishing vessel that returned to the Illichivsk port from overseas. The disease was detected accidentally: One of the sailors had been hospitalized following an entirely different diagnosis. He was examined for AIDS and tested HIV-positive. As a result, the entire crew of the vessel was examined and another two carriers of the virus were revealed. Medics are now conducting difficult searches for those who had contacts with the HIV carriers.

Doctor Views Rise in Infectious Diseases in Kiev

AU1512093193 Kiev HOLOS UKRAYINY in Ukrainian
11 Dec 93 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Yet Another Calamity"]

[Text] The number of diphtheria cases in Kiev continues to grow. At present, 523 such cases have been recorded. This fearsome infection has also struck 53 children. The number of diphtheria cases is particularly high among workers in the trade sphere, medical institutions, public catering, and transport. Quite a number of other infectious diseases, among them many exotic ones, brought from other countries, can also be observed.

As Lyubov Nekrasova, the city's chief sanitary-epidemiologic doctor, stated at a news conference, this does not conclude the list of misfortunes that have afflicted and continue to afflict Kievans. From the middle of November, the number of acute respiratory diseases has risen. In the doctor's opinion, this is due to the unsatisfactory heating of offices, production premises, and schools, and also to the fact that people have to spend much time at stops of public transport due to the deterioration in the public transportation sphere.

As predicted by the Ukrainian Influenza Center, in the first quarter of the next year, an epidemic of flu is expected not only in Kiev, but also throughout Ukraine. In the capital, the epidemic will rage in January and February.

The city state administration is trying to influence such a development of events and to take preventive measures. Presidential representative in Kiev Leonid Kosakivsky signed a directive meant for improving the sanitary-epidemiologic situation. However, the situation continues to be complex. The shortage of medicines and vaccines makes itself felt. There is not enough money to procure them. For example, there are not enough anti-diphtherial preparations for vaccinating teenagers, conscripts, students, and persons from risk groups. A sum of \$12,500 is necessary for purchasing them.

It only remains to rely upon the enthusiasm and ingenuity of those people who remain on the alert and are ready to protect citizens' health.

Foreign Citizens Said To Cause Contagious Diseases Outbreak

*WS1712122793 Kiev KHRESHCHATYK in Ukrainian
15 Dec 93 p 2*

[Report by Lidiya Surzhyk: "Is Kiev Under Occupation?"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] According to official estimates, foreign citizens currently residing in Kiev include 1,100 individuals from Afghanistan and Pakistan, 1,000 individuals from Vietnam, and 139 individuals from Angola, who came from Russia. Incidentally, one of them is sick with AIDS in the hospital, but cannot be sent back home if only because no one has \$3,000 to pay for the trip.

The uncontrolled stay of foreigners in Kiev triggered an outbreak of different "exotic" contagious diseases—the last thing that we need after the Chernobyl catastrophe. This year, 123 cases of malaria were reported in Kiev, compared to 9 in 1991. There is no need to emphasize what consequences this might have for a city with 3 million inhabitants. In Kiev, 92 individuals were reported to have AIDS, of which 27 are Kiev residents and the rest foreign citizens. [Shestomatoz], a highly unusual disease in Ukraine, also appeared in the country. The spread of skin and venereal diseases has recently grown at a particularly alarming rate—their number tripled over the past 10 years. [passage omitted]

REGIONAL AFFAIRS

Europe Lags Behind U.S. in Biotechnology

BR2312084993 London *INTERFACE EUROPE*
in English Nov 93

[Unattributed article: "EC Biotechnology Policy"]

[Text] It is generally agreed that biotechnology is a vital key to future industrial competitiveness and strength, but the EC Commission is concerned that Europe is lagging badly behind the United States in this very important field.

This was the major point made by the Commission speaker at a well attended IETT [Institute of European Trade and Technology] conference on the subject in London on November 9th. The speaker was Dr. Maurice Lex, who, before moving to the CEC's [Commission of the European Community] Biotechnology Unit in Brussels, was Acting Director of SERC's [Science and Engineering Research Council] Biotechnology Directorate. He went on to list what the Commission sees as Europe's chief weaknesses in the area. These are:

- Lack of consensus on the scientific objectives to be aimed for;
- The relative isolation of academic research;
- A complex regulatory system which many find hostile to research;
- Under development of the SME sector;
- A poor and declining public perception and understanding of biotechnology. (This Dr. Lex identified as perhaps the most significant weakness. Even a small amount of negative coverage on TV, he said, can have a powerful effect on public opinion, even putting students off deciding to specialise in the subject).

It was sad to see European companies moving their research activities to the United States where regulations are easier, he commented.

So far, Member States had come together in joint projects as part of CEC programmes. More collaboration is needed.

But Europe does have its strengths, too:

- Biotechnology is given reasonable priority in the Member States;
- There are substantial investments in R&D by large companies, mainly chemical, agro-chemical, seed and pharmaceutical companies;
- Collaborative behavior has been stimulated by previous EC programmes;
- There is strong involvement of a large cross-section of industry in horizontal activities—CEFIC [European Council of Federations of the Chemical Industry], SAGB

[Senior Advisory Group on Biotechnology], National Biotech Associations, Industrial Platforms etc.;

—High expectations from various parts of society for various reasons.

There would be a very significant increase in the funds available for supporting biotechnology research in the fourth framework programme, Dr. Lex told the conference. He also referred to three recent reports issued by the industrial R&D committee (IRDAC) of the EC on the life sciences programmes—covering in particular biomedical research, and agriculture, biochemical and food, with reference to the fourth Framework Programme.

IRDAC calls for more industrial participation in all projects, and identifies a number of lateral issues which merit special attention including training, productive systems, safety regulation, intellectual property and education. Copies of these reports can be obtained from Dr. Lex, Fax: Brussels 296-4322.

As previously reported, there is a third call for proposals under the current CEC Biotechnology programme with a deadline of 12.1.94. An information pack may be obtained from: E. Magnien, DGXII-E/1. Fax: Brussels 295-5365.

AUSTRIA

Health Minister Announces Number of AIDS Cases

AU3011151693 Vienna *WIENER ZEITUNG*
in German 30 Nov 93 p 7

[Unattributed report: "AIDS Information To Be Extended"]

[Excerpt] "The best vaccine is information that leads to a change of behavior," Health Minister Michael Ausserwinkler stated on Monday [29 November] on the occasion of the upcoming World AIDS Day on 1 December. He announced plans to considerably expand information activities and to coordinate the individual measures in Austria to a greater extent. Thus, 18 million schillings will be available for a broad information campaign on AIDS in 1994 (10 million in 1993). The funds for AIDS relief organization and other institutions will be increased from 31.8 million (1993) to 35 million schillings.

The minister described the current situation as follows: "By the end of November a total of 1,077 persons had developed AIDS, and 667 thereof had died. The number of those infected with the HIV virus in Austria is estimated at 10,000 to 15,000. It is assumed that one to two persons are newly infected every day." There is no complete therapy for those who have developed the disease. Realistically, one must proceed from the premise that there will be no vaccine against AIDS by the year 2000. The minister estimated the costs for the treatment of a person who has developed AIDS at 1 to 1.5 million schillings. [passage omitted]

GERMANY

BMFT Funds R&D Program on Infectious Diseases

BR2311102193 Bonn *TECHNOLOGIE-NACHRICHTEN*
MANAGEMENT-INFORMATIONEN in German
15 Oct 93 pp 4-5

[Text] BMFT [Federal Ministry of Research and Technology] funding of research on infectious diseases to date has shown that basic research has attained world level, whereas there is still ground to be made up in, primarily, applied, patient-oriented research. The new "Infection Research" funding scheme, which is being launched under the "Health Research 2000" program, will take account of this experience. It will bring together and continue existing BMFT funding measures on AIDS, tropical medicine, and other infectious diseases. In future, priority will be given to funding projects with particular potential for enhancing clinical research structures in this area. It is initially intended to fund the scheme with approximately 35 million German marks [DM] a year. The following individual topics will be covered:

- The AIDS pandemic has made everyone aware of the health hazard to the population posed when new pathogens appear. With an estimated 60,000 to 70,000 patients infected in Germany alone since the outbreak of the pandemic, AIDS-related topics will continue to require an enormous amount of work. However, topics such as infection via tick bites (Lyme's borreliosis) and the much-debated possibility of the transfer to humans of what is popularly known as "mad cow disease" are also worth mentioning in this connection. These examples illustrate the need to create sufficient research capability to meet new challenges effectively.
- The rapid increase in salmonella cases in recent times has shown how known pathogens spread: The number of new infections has doubled in only 10 years to over 90,000 cases a year. The constant rise in the number of infections contracted in hospital, which constitutes a growing problem for our health system, is also a major issue here.
- The phenomenon of resistance to antibiotics has been known for a long time but has recently become a greater hazard with the advent of multiresistances in tuberculosis pathogens and the progressive development of resistance in the malaria tropica pathogen.

The transition of findings from research into practice is still being hindered by a lack of cooperation between basic research and clinicians. One of the reasons why this is so in Germany is that infectious diseases have low priority as a clinical specialization, which, indeed, is absent from most university clinics. Three funding channels designed specifically to remedy these shortcomings will therefore be used to continue existing BMFT funding of research into infectious diseases:

- The funding of joint research is intended to foster local, regional, and national interdisciplinary cooperation. The funding authority specifies no particular topics, so all areas of applied research into infection are eligible.
- In order to place the study of infectious diseases on a firmer institutional footing, structural aid for university research facilities and funds for redirecting existing facilities will be granted. This offer of financial priming over a limited period is designed primarily to stimulate and support research work in faculties of medicine, which has largely had to give way to routine health care work over recent decades.
- A grants scheme will be available to attract trainee scientists to this field. This scheme follows on from the established AIDS grant scheme, which will cease to be exclusive to work on AIDS in the future. As a rule, funding will be provided for a two-year term spent at a research facility of international renown followed by a post at a German institute for a maximum of three years.

The BMFT is currently funding infectious disease research under four main headings:

- AIDS: Shortly after the first cases of the disease were reported in Germany, the BMFT issued an initial announcement on research funding at the end of 1983. 1984 saw the beginning of the first projects financed by the BMFT. Since then, 138 medical and natural science research projects, 34 social science research projects, and nine clinical research consortia (in Berlin, Frankfurt (2), Hamburg, Hannover, Heidelberg, Munich (2), and Wuerzburg) have been funded and 58 grants awarded. Overall, approximately DM165 million have been spent to date on AIDS research. In the initial stages it was necessary to fund AIDS research under a single program to react rapidly to a new health policy challenge. German AIDS research has attained a high standard, although a solution to the AIDS problem cannot be expected in the short term. The topic will therefore remain a major area for funding.
- Tropical medicine: The BMFT intended this program to provide targeted funding for research on tropical medicine in areas where the funding could be expected to promote long-term structural improvements. The first measure introduced was the comprehensive restructuring and reorientation of the Bernhard Nocht Institute of Tropical Medicine in Hamburg, on which DM8.7 million have been spent since 1992.
- Diagnostics of infectious diseases: The primary goal here was to improve and extend the available range of methods for detecting pathogens or pathogen components and antibodies in viral, bacterial, fungal, and parasite infections. Grants totaling about DM17 million were awarded to 46 projects between 1981 and 1991.

—Infectious diseases: This heading covered the whole range of research from fundamental principles to diagnostic and therapeutic advances and vaccine development. Between 1987 and 1992, a total of 54 individual projects, 10 consortia, and one case of structural aid (for Wuerzburg University's Infectious Disease Research Center) were funded for an approximate total of DM67 million.

Further information on the Infection Research funding scheme may be obtained from the BMFT's Health-Related Research Project Manager, German Aerospace Research Institute, Suedstr. 125, D-53175 Bonn, tel. 0228/3821-210.

IRELAND

Increased Tourism Raises Incidence of Malaria

94WE0120A Dublin IRISH INDEPENDENT
in English 16 Nov 93 p 4

[Article by Geraldine Collins: "Tourists Warned of Big Rise in Malaria Cases"]

[Excerpt] Increased Irish tourism traffic to the tropics for exotic and adventure holidays has dramatically raised the number of malaria cases detected here in recent years, some of them fatal.

Three Irish people have died of the disease in the past two years and this year more than 60 cases have been diagnosed and treated in Ireland.

Not only are more Irish people visiting malaria-endemic regions, but many do so with neither the administration of the necessary drugs nor knowledge of how to protect themselves.

There is no vaccine against malaria which kills up to 2m annually, far more people than AIDS. The medical battle against the disease is severely hampered by the fact that the mosquito, which transmits the malaria parasite from person to person, is becoming increasingly resistant to insecticides.

The mosquito could be "the most dangerous animal in the world" according to Dr John Dalton, senior lecturer in molecular parasitology at Dublin City University, in an article in *Technology Ireland*.

Research shows that 97pc of British travellers to Africa receive some advice on the malaria risk before departure but only three-quarters understood the disease is transmitted by mosquitoes and of these only one-third were aware of their night-biting habits.

Dr Dalton says that while no statistics are available for Irish tourists, one can presume they behave similarly to the British of whom only 46pc take the drugs prescribed before, during and after their holidays.

[Passage omitted]

Incidence of Pneumonia in Young Cattle High

94WE0121A Dublin IRISH INDEPENDENT
in English 9 Nov 93 Supplement p 3

[Article: "Vets Warning on Pneumonia"]

[Text] The highest episode of pneumonia in young cattle ever is being reported by veterinary surgeons in practice, according to a statement yesterday from the Irish Veterinary Union.

Vets are recommending that susceptible animals be vaccinated pre-sale and certified accordingly. This approach would add to the sale value of animals and reduce the incidence of pneumonia.

The IVU has approached a number of marts on the issue and they are fully supportive. According to a statement, the primary viruses responsible are IBR, P13 and RSV.

While these viruses have been at low levels in the cattle population, the IVU maintain that the current high levels of imports is adding to the problem.

A preventative vaccination programme is recommended as there are no drug therapies to combat these viruses, although treatments for secondary infections are available.

NORWAY

Testing of New Anticancer Drug Described

94WE0123A Oslo AFTENPOSTEN in Norwegian
10 Dec 93 p 2

[Article by Lene Skogstrom: "Norwegian-Developed Cancer Vaccine"]

[Text] Pronova has secured for itself the sole right to develop and sell a cancer vaccine that is now being tested at the National Hospital.

The Norwegian pharmaceutical firm Pronova has entered into an agreement to develop and sell the cancer vaccine that has been developed at the Institute for Transplantation Immunology (ITI).

If the results of the therapeutic vaccine are as promising as the scientists believe, great possibilities may open up on the world market for the Norwegian pharmaceutical firm.

The state company Medinnova at the National Hospital has negotiated the agreement. It includes 10 million kroner for further basic research at the Institute for Transplantation Immunology. In addition, there are possibilities of license earnings in the future.

"We have collaborated with the Institute for two to three years already. The cancer vaccine project is extremely interesting, but it is a long way off," says Sven Arild Andersen, administrative director of Pronova.

The Norwegian scientists at ITI and the doctors at the National Hospital are the first in the world to test this type of cancer vaccine on humans.

The cancer vaccine is supposed to help the patient's own immune defenses to attack the cancer tumors. If the results are as the scientists hope, the vaccine can help approximately one-fourth of all new cancer patients each year. This pertains to a part of the patients who get cancer of the colon, lungs, pancreas, and thyroid, along with leukemia and malignant birthmark tumors.

"Without the cross-professional and very competent milieu at the Institute for Transplantation Immunology we would never have been where we are today," says Gustav Gaudernack, leader of the group of scientists behind the cancer vaccine project and senior scientist at the Norwegian Cancer Society.

Five Patients

In the research project, five patients at the National Hospital with cancer of the pancreas are involved in testing out the first vaccine.

An operation or other treatment is not appropriate for these patients.

For the moment, the vaccine has not been shown to produce side effects. It is too early to say anything about results. If this first test goes well, the research group will seek authorization to test the vaccine on colon cancer patients by spring.

Not all patients can take part in the experiments. The vaccine is supposed to awaken and work as a team with the patient's own immune defenses and, therefore, it is important that the immune defenses are functioning well. Patients whose immune systems have been suppressed after cell poisoning or radiation therapy will probably react poorly to the vaccine and are not appropriate for treatment.

"Therefore, we want to introduce the vaccine as early as possible," Gaudernack points out. "The idea is that the vaccine will prevent remaining cancer cells from developing further following an operation or other treatment. In the future, the vaccine can also be used as a preventive vaccine if we can identify persons at risk by gene testing and begin the vaccine before the cancer has broken out."

"Tailor-Made"

The vaccine is tailor-made to each individual patient.

Cancer tumors are produced when changes occur spontaneously in some of the body's genes, so-called mutations. One gene family, which is called "ras," is important from the point of view of the cancer cell—a sort of "cancer cell Achilles heel." The cancer cell needs this gene in order to grow.

"We have found out that three mutations in ras genes are the most frequent. In the pilot study we are testing out

these three. We must therefore find patients who have precisely such mutations in their genes," Gaudernack relates.

In order to choose the right patients the scientists at ITI have developed an extrasensitive gene test, for which an international patent has been sought.

Many scientists around the world are testing "rougher" types of cancer vaccines. But the Norwegian vaccine is special because it takes aim precisely against a specific gene mutation that has been identified within the patient. "Therefore, we avoid subjecting patients to treatment that in any case would not do any good," Gaudernack says.

In a few years, the research team at the National Hospital will know much more about the cancer vaccine's potentials. Gaudernack will not indicate when the vaccine may go into commercial production.

"This can take time, depending upon what sort of response the patients have to the vaccine—and whether the effects will be different for different types of cancer," he says. "We are breaking new ground and it is important to do the job properly before talking about offering the cancer vaccine as a part of the treatment of cancer patients."

[Box, p 2]

How the Vaccine Works

- A tissue test of the tumor shows whether the patient has the appropriate gene mutation that the vaccine will work against.
- A blood sample is taken from the patient—white blood corpuscles are drawn out.
- Specially suited vaccines—so-called peptides—are transferred to the white blood corpuscles drawn from the patient.
- The "new" white blood corpuscles are injected back into the patient.
- The "new" white blood corpuscles rouse the other white corpuscles to an attack against the cancer cells.
- The cancer tumor is beaten back.

SWEDEN

Less Serious, HIV-Related Virus Found Among Drug Addicts

94WE0105A Stockholm DAGENS NYHETER
in Swedish 21 Nov 93 p 6

[Article by Kerstin Hellbom: "New Virus Among Drug Addicts"—introductory paragraph in boldface as published]

[Text] Another virus infection affecting mostly intravenous drug users has now been discovered in Sweden. It is the HTLV virus, closely related to HIV, and it has been found in blood samples. The National Board of Health

and Welfare has therefore decided that all blood testing will now have to include a test for the HTLV virus.

"The virus is now present in our country, but the risk of infection is very small," says Assoc. Prof. Aud Krook, chief physician at the infectious disease clinic at Huddinge Hospital. At the doctors' convention early in December, she will present the results of her study of the incidence of HTLV in blood samples from intravenous drug users.

She found HTLV in 10 out of 134 blood samples. All 10 subjects had had hepatitis A, B, and C and jaundice, and seven of the 10 were also HIV-positive.

"The incidence of HTLV was surprisingly high. In every case, the virus was present in addicts who had been exposed to a great deal of infection."

In another study, this one involving blood samples from Lund and Malmo, that will also be presented at the doctors' convention, eight HIV-positive cases were found, while a third study, conducted by the Infectious Disease Control Institute, turned up 14 cases.

Exactly like HIV, HTLV belongs to the family of retroviruses, meaning that one of its peculiar features is that it does not disappear from the body's cells once it gains entry. It can remain there for years without giving any sign of its presence, but then suddenly it strikes and causes serious symptoms of illness. It is spread in the same way as HIV—that is, through blood and blood products, by sexual contact, and from mother to child during pregnancy or breast-feeding.

In the early 1980's, the virus that causes AIDS was named HTLV-3, but it turned out that the AIDS virus belonged to a different branch of the retrovirus family, so it was renamed HIV-1. HIV belongs to the lentivirus branch, which attacks the immune system, while HTLV belongs to the oncovirus branch, which among other things can cause leukemia.

HTLV has its own offshoots: type 1 and type 2. In most cases, the virus discovered in blood samples in Sweden is HTLV-2. Types 1 and 2 can both cause leukemia and a disease known as TSP [Tropical Spastic Paraparesis], which paralyzes the body from the waist down.

"Those diseases are very rare even among people infected with the virus. HTLV is not as 'efficient' as HIV: It can remain in the cells for decades without presenting any symptoms," says Krook.

She also feels that the risk of infection is extremely small. Contaminated blood from blood donors would probably have been discarded since in most cases, the infected donors also have jaundice or HIV. Blood products supplied to hemophiliacs have been processed to kill HIV, thereby killing HTLV as well.

Retroviruses remain in the cells and can cause disease after many years. Oncoviruses (HTLV-1, HTLV-2,

STLV-1, and others) can cause cancer. Lentiviruses (HIV-1, HIV-2, SIV, and others) weaken the immune system.

Sabbatsberg Hospital To Close

94WE0105B Stockholm SVENSKA DAGBLADET
in Swedish 17 Nov 93 p 11

[Article by Anna Angstrom: "Last Week at Sabbatsberg Emergency Clinic"]

[Text] Where was the clamor, the whimpering, the howling, and the ambulances? It gave one a strange feeling to walk into Sabbatsberg, Stockholm's main emergency clinic, on a Tuesday afternoon and find the personnel gathered in the coffee room. A box of chocolates—a gift from a grateful patient—was being passed around.

"Things used to be hopping around here, but now we jump if the telephone rings," head nurse Soren Carlsson joked.

Humor was mixed with bitterness and anger. Because lying around everywhere were yellow slips of paper confirming that the end was near: The emergency clinic will shut down on Friday. When that happens, the telephones will stop ringing for good, and the empty ambulance garage, where the personnel have set up a temporary "therapy corner" with good and bad papier-mache figures (one of the bad figures has been christened Ralph Ledel), will be demolished.

People commonly referred to as the victims of society's dark side—knifing victims, traffic victims, and heroin abusers—will be taken to other emergency rooms: at St. Goran, Caroline, and Huddinge Hospitals. It is not just Sabbatsberg's emergency room that will disappear: The entire hospital will be closed on 15 December and reopened after the first of the year as a local hospital operated by M&M Medical, Inc., with from 40 to 50 employees. Sabbatsberg's 1,600 employees are being scattered around among various places. The building contractor is already busy making alterations to the former alcohol detox unit.

"We were not supposed to close before the end of November, but everything is being speeded up. Even though it is not possible to close down a hospital in two months," said an indignant Carlsson.

Politicians in the Toilet

He was not alone in his feelings—or his humiliation over the politicians' decision, which seems to be anything but well founded economically. Among other things, the brand-new operating rooms are being put "in mothballs."

"We have a palace that we have to leave. Everything works perfectly—it is easy to operate," said a nurse in the operating unit. She laughed when SVENSKA DAGBLADET's photographer Jurek Holzer caught sight of a

little monument on the wall: a chamber pot the bottom of which was decorated with two pictures of politicians responsible for the change.

"That was put up when feelings were at their peak," said the nurse, who was unwilling to have her name printed in the newspaper.

To some extent, anger has given way to resignation. Several gaps can be seen in the list of scheduled operations. The number of patients has fallen off, and so has the number of personnel. Most of the employees know where they will go after the end of the year, but there is still anger over the way the assignments were made.

"We received notices to indicate our interests last spring, but then the answers were a long time coming. And when they did, we had only one week in which to answer or become unemployed. For mothers of small children, that was tremendously difficult."

Sabbatsberg has a specialist clinic for jaw operations. Surgeon Hans Bystedt will perform his final operation on 8 December. The decision as to where the clinic will move to will be made the following day. That decision has already been postponed once, and Bystedt does not seem fully convinced that it will be made on 9 December either.

Want To Go to Soder Hospital

"We will probably be relegated to some shack," he said with a laugh. Then he became serious and talked about finances and cooperation with the plastic surgeons and ear, nose, and throat specialists at Soder Hospital.

"We want to go there, but the administration wants to move us to Caroline Hospital. The most important thing is to keep the waiting list from growing longer. Most of our patients are young, and for them, a six-month wait is an eternity."

There was an atmosphere of leave-taking in the air, even though work was proceeding as usual.

In the newly renovated X-ray department—the city's best, said department head Anders Tyden proudly—one could hear a statement that is common at Sabbatsberg these days:

"So long! I'm off to take a look at my new job."

And in the emergency unit's coffee room, Asa, Maj-Britt, and Soren were already talking about memories of the years at Sabbatsberg.

"I'll never forget the guy who escaped and smashed up the cars in the parking lot."

"Do you remember the meadow just outside? And the cafe across the street where we used to buy pastry?"

UNITED KINGDOM

Minister Reports Problems of National Health Service

94WE0112A London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH
in English 14 Nov 93 p 9

[Article by Victoria Macdonald, Health Correspondent: "Health Targets Have Failed Says Bottomley"]

[Text] Virginia Bottomley, the Health Secretary, will admit tomorrow that the Government's Health of the Nation strategy is failing to have any effect on three of its key targets.

Releasing the first year's progress report, Mrs Bottomley will acknowledge the target figures have either increased or remained the same for suicides, obesity, and teenage smoking.

Health of the Nation aims to reduce the overall suicide rate by at least 15 per cent and the suicide rate of the severely mentally ill by 33 per cent by the year 2000. Instead there has been an overall increase from 1989-91 to 1990-92 of 0.9 per cent.

The target for obesity is a six per cent reduction in the number of men who are seriously overweight and an eight per cent reduction among women by 2005. In men, obesity numbers have nearly doubled from eight per cent to 13 per cent and in women from 12 per cent to 15 per cent since 1986.

There has been no movement in the aim to reduce the prevalence of smoking among 11 to 15 year olds by at least 33 per cent by 1994.

Mrs Bottomley said that overall, there had been "impressive progress" in establishing the strategy's foundations. "This is not a coercive, nannying approach. It is to enlist the willing co-operation of the public."

But of particular concern to the Health Secretary are the suicide figures, which she said account for one in 100 deaths, more than for road traffic accidents.

"Think of the effort we put into the Christmas drink driving campaign to reduce avoidable deaths on the road," Mrs Bottomley said.

"It gives some measure of the energy in turn to put into combating suicide."

To turn the figures around, the Health Department is spending £1 million on a public information campaign and working with GPs to improve their ability to identify mental illness.

It is thought that as many as 40 per cent of those who take their lives had contacted their GPs within the week before they died. It is also estimated that 89 million working days are lost each year on mental illness.

"In 1979 we lost 29 million days on industrial action and as a nation we decided this was outrageous," Mrs Bottomley said.

Dr Kenneth Calman, the Government's senior medical officer, said that suicide was a complex issue but was a good marker for mental illness as a whole. He also said it was preventable if people could be helped through their

"bad patch," but that it was important to look at the accessibility to the means, such as guns or drugs.

But Dr Colin Brewer, a psychiatrist who has studied suicide patterns, was dismissive of the Government's efforts and said pamphlets would have little effect. Instead, Dr Brewer suggested changes in prescribing habits away from toxic antidepressants to newer drugs that do not kill people in overdose.

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